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MEMORIES OF THE PRAIRIES

by

J. Palmer Kvam

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MEMORIES OF THE PRAIRIES

Foreward

This story of Johannes and Petrine Kvam's pioneer life on the North Dakota prairie is written by me and dedicated to our descendents. The purpose of the story is to preserve to them the true facts of a mode of life which has passed away and is now only a memory. I am proud of my parents and their ability to progress, in spite of adverse conditions. They made possible many happy childhood memories for my sisters and myself. It was through the persuasion of my sons, Robert and Russell, and with the help of my wife, Signe, that this account is now completed.

I received a great deal of help from my sisters, especially Clara and Ida, in recalling some of the incidents of our life on the farm.

October 21, 1959

Affectionately,

J. Palmer Kvam

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JOHANNES JENS KVAM

Johannes Kvam lived in Sogne Dalen, Norway. He married Johanna (maiden name unknown). He met death through drowning as a young man. (He may have been a fisherman) Johannes and Johanna Kvam were the parents of three children: Lars, Johannes Jens, and Anna.

After the death of Johannes, Johanna married Ole Yngsdahl. To this union three children were born: Peter, Johanna, and Carl.

In due time Ole and Johanna Yngsdahl and the six children migrated to America as so many Scandinavian people did. Due to high winds and severe storms it required seven weeks to cross the Atlantic in the small wooden sail boat. Most of the passengers became seasick. With inadequate toilet facilities, less than favorable sanitary conditions, rationed drinking water, and moldy food, the voyage was not a pleasant experience for the emigrants. When one of the passengers died during the voyage, the body was covered with a white sheet and dropped into the ocean after the funeral services.

Upon arriving in Minnesota in 1864, they homesteaded in Goodhue County. Log buildings were erected after which came the slow process of grubbing and clearing the land with oxen and crude equipment.

After small plots of ground were cleared of trees, a walking plow was used to till the soil. It was a wooden tool, clumsy to use, requiring great power to pull. It did turn the ground over and pulverize it to some extent. It turned only one furrow and was drawn by a yoke of oxen. The name "walking plow" was used because the plowman walked behind and kept it in position by grasping its handles. Less than an acre a day could be plowed in this manner.

Sowing the seed was done by broadcasting it. The sack was carried under one arm, leaving the other free to take the seed and scatter it over the soil as evenly as possible. At first harvesting the grain was done by the use of the scythe and cradle. With this method the grain was laid in even rows on the stubble as it was cut. A good worker could cut about an acre a day. Later a reaper was used. This machine cut the grain. A reel bent the grain against the knives and also picked up the stalks that were bent or lodged so that all of the grain was cut. As the grain was cut it was laid on a platform from which it was raked into a pile on the ground by a man following the machine. The reaper was pulled by one horse with a man either riding or leading the animal.

In threshing, the grain was tramped by animals that were driven around and around the threshing floor. After the grain had

been threshed, it was poured from one pan to another so as to permit the wind to blow away the chaff.

Our immediate interest centers around the second son of the family: Johannes Jens. Born September 12, 1857. Johannes Jens was seven years old when he accompanied his mother and step-father to America. He retained the name of his own father, that of Kvam. Kvam is the district of Sogne Dalen, Norway, where this family originated. This custom of appropriating the name of the district was common practice at that time.

Young Johannes Jens experienced rough seas on his ocean voyage so that his memories of it were not the happiest. After growing to manhood on the farm he left home, working at odd jobs in the surrounding towns, Red Wing, Faribault, and Northfield. He worked as a driver at one of the livery stables. The job consisted of picking up traveling men and other passengers at hotels and taking them to their destinations in surrounding towns. Now days this occupation would be known by the word "chauffeur" but in those days the Norwegian name for it was "Kusk". They used light, fast ponies with a light carriage, usually called a buggy, for summer driving and a sleigh during the winter. Sleigh bells were customary. Buffalo robes were used to keep warm when driving over the prairie roads in winter.

He worked for Reverend Muus, a pioneer pastor of the Lutheran church, and continued in this employment for several years, serving as his driver(kusk) and song leader (klokker) at the church services.

A young son of the pastor became very fond of Johannes Jens during this time. This son became very ill with pneumonia and wanted Johannes Jens near him constantly. Johannes sat by the boy for three weeks but in spite of good care, the boy passed away.

After leaving the employment of Pastor Muus, he worked on the police force, hauled dray, worked in a meat market, the coal sheds, and the round house. At the age of twenty-three he married Oline Gurina Nelson. To this union seven children were born. Oline passed away in May 1894. Later he moved to Ransom county, North Dakota where he was a butter-maker at a creamery in Lisbon. On September 26, 1895, he was united in marriage to Petrine Amelie Christofferson at Forman, North Dakota.

Johannes Jens was baptized as a child and confirmed after coming to the United States. He was a firm believer in the Lutheran faith and a member of the church all of his life.

Very little is known about the brothers and sisters of Johannes Jens: Lars Kvam (married and had two boys and an adopted daughter): Anna Kvam (married and had two girls and a boy); Peter Yngsdahl, half brother (married Annie who died a few years ago at the age of 96 or 97. They had a large family); Johanna Yngsdahl, unknown; Carl Yngsdahl, unknown.

PETRINE AMELIE (CHRISTOFFERSEN) KVAM

Petrine Amelie's grandmother, on her mother's side of the family, was Anne Margrethe Christoffersen. Born in Sletten in Nord-Rana, Norway. She married Per Iverson, also born in Nord-Rana. They made their home in Neppelberg, and there Petrine Amelie's mother was born (my grandmother) on April 8, 1848. Her name, Ida Kristine Pedersdatter, was an only child.

Petrine Amelie's grandmother's name, on her father's side of the family was Ellen Larson. She, too, was born in Nord-Rana. She married Christoffer Christoffersen. He was born in Sletten in Nord-Rana. (He was a brother of the Anne Margrethe named above. Hence our grandparents were cousins) They made their home in Nord-Rana. Ellen and Christoffer had four children of which one, Christoffer Olaus, born June 10, 1841, was Petrine Amelie's father. (my grandfather)

Ellen Larson Christoffersen became a widow and re-married a man named Halger. They had four children, one of which was Rode Holgersen, our grandfather's half-brother. At the last report he lived in Seattle, Washington.

Christoffer Olaus and Ida Krinstine Christoffersen married and had nine children. Namely:

Christoffer (died as a child)

Petrine Amelie (Kvam) (my mother)

Christoffer Bank (passed away at the age of 80 years.
He lived at Bardal, Norway)

Helga (Larson) (passed away at Marysville, Washington)

Kristine (died as a child)

Kristine (Aasen) (passed away in 1958)

Axel Olinious Gloppen Neppelberg (passed away April 28,
1948. He used the name Neppelberg, the name of the
family farm)

Juleanna (Munsen) (Lives at Lelfors, Mo i Rana, Norway)

Godlief Christoffersen (now living on the family farm
in Norway)

Our immediate interest centers on Petrine Amelie, born October 15, 1870, in Helgeland, Norway. She was baptized and

confirmed in the Lutheran faith and continued as a faithful member and worker of that church. Her parents, Ellen and Christoffer, were the owners of a farm, or GAARD, as it was called in Norwegian. The men farmed during the summer but their main occupation was fishing. They sailed north to Lofoten during the fishing season where there was an abundance of fish. Being the owner of a GAARD, they had share-croppers living on and working part of the land. It was the duty of the women to take care of the few goats, sheep, and cattle and help with the haying.

Her dad, Christoffer, was elected to the Parliament (Storting). He was a member of the upper house (Lagting). He served in that capacity for several terms, each term being three years. All of the family was well-educated, considering the schooling that was offered at that time.

Her brother, Christoffer, was the first of the family to emigrate to the United States. He left Norway and came to eastern North Dakota, working as a farm hand for the farmers in the vicinity of Lisbon, North Dakota. Intending to make his home in America, he sent his girl friend and his sister, Petrine, the money for tickets to Fargo, North Dakota. However, after all preparations had been made, the girl friend decided against coming to America. Petrine (mother) was met by Christoffer at Fargo. On arriving at Lisbon, she went to work for a family named Crocker. (Mr. Crocker was the County Superintendent of Schools of Ransom County) Later Christoffer returned to Norway where he made his home.

Grandpa Christoffer Christoffersen died March 1931, at the age of 89 years and 9 months. Grandmother Ida Kristine died September 21, 1933 at the age of 85. She had a stroke and lived but a few days afterwards. Grandpa died of old age.

Mother's sister, Helgo, later came to America, arriving here the last year we lived in Ransom county. She worked in the Lisbon vicinity until she married Ludwig Larson. They had six children. Namely:

Anna Larson:	Mrs. Walter E. Mercer 1232 South 10th Street Mount Vernon, Washington
Laura Larson:	Mrs. Thomas T. Watson Mercer Island, Washington
Clifford Larson:	Route 2, Box 536 Marysville, Washington
Willard Larson:	(died January 1944)

Henry Larson: 2638 Knox Avenue North
Minneapolis 11, Minnesota

Clarence Larson: Box 344
Gainesville, Texas

(The above addresses are of December 13, 1950)

Mother's sister, Julianna, lives in Norway. Although old, she takes care of herself. She has a large home and her daughter, Inbjor Aune, and husband live in the same house with her. Robert, her son, and his family live in a new home close by. They have a baby girl named Ida. There is another daughter named Gunvor.

Mother's brother, Gottlieb Christoffersen, is living on the farm (Gaard) located at Lavong, Helgeland, Norway. This farm originally belonged to my grandparents. There are many more relatives living in Norway of which we, as of now, have no information.

Petrine Amelie (Mother) continued working in Lisbon until September 26, 1896. She was then united in marriage to Johannes Jens Kvam, after which they started farming on rented land near Fort Ransom, North Dakota.

Our story will start here.

OUR STAY IN RANSOM COUNTY

(With the aid of my older sister, Clara, this is a narrative of our stay in Ransom County, North Dakota and our move to the homestead in Sheridan County, North Dakota as we recall it and as told to us by our parents.)

The first farm the folks lived on was the Chisholm farm. Clara was born there. I recall the farm buildings as being on a hill side. They were all painted red, including the house. It was about one mile south of the Will Heckel farm where I was born about a year later. We lived on the Will Heckel farm until I was five years old, when we moved to the homestead.

There were three other children born at this farm; two boys and a girl. All three died in infancy. The baby brothers I do not remember. The little sister was nine months old when she passed away. I remember her as a sweet, happy baby until she became ill and Dr. Sticksrud was called. He put her in ice cold water to bring down the fever and she died almost instantly. If medical science had been what it is today they probably would have lived. The boys were both named Christopher after their maternal Grandfather. The little girl was named Ida Oline.

This same Dr. Sticksrud performed a minor operation on me when I was about three or four years old. I had to stay at his home until the following day. That evening I told his wife and him, "I want oat meal soup!" They were unable to understand me. I became angry and insisted on "oat meal soup" as that was one of the regular menus in our home.

Our closest neighbor, about one and one-half miles east of us, was an Irish family by the name of Babcock. Mrs. Babcock was a very poor housekeeper. The children, Bob, Earl, and Marjory, who sometimes came to play with us, were not always neat.

Our best friends were the Peter Berg family. They had one son, Archibald, the same age as myself. They and my parents visited frequently and celebrated Christmas together. Mrs. Berg used to make doll dresses for Clara's dolls. We stayed at their home the last night before leaving for Balfour and the homestead.

Across the road from the house in which we lived was a fenced in school section. Andrew Lamb had it rented. We and other neighbors paid him for keeping our cattle in his pasture. Among the herd was a big red bull with a copper ring in his nose. He used to chase anyone coming into or close to the pasture. The only

one he had respect for was Dad. He would bellow and paw but when Dad started for him he would leave. Dad had beat him with a pitch fork once, in self-defense, so the bull must have decided it was wise not to have any more encounters with him.

There was a nice duck pond in this pasture, directly below the hill from our house. During hunting season there would be a lot of wild ducks swimmin in it. The hunters would drive up, and seeing the ducks, would tie their team to a fence post by the gate, crawl through the fence and start for the pond. As a rule they wore red hunting caps and shirts. About the time they would get within shooting distance of the ducks, the bull would spot them and come bellowing and snorting on a dead run toward the hunters. We would be watching from the house, getting a kick out of seeing them run for the fence with the bull in pursuit. Most of the time they would just get over the fence in time. They would untie their team and drive away, looking for safer places in which to hunt.

One time two cattle buyers came out to look at some cattle they wanted to buy. It was a warm day so before starting into the pasture, they discarded their coats, leaving them in their buggy. As they walked towards the herd in their white shirts the bull saw them coming. He let out one bellow and started for them on the run. I shall never forget the speed by which they made it back over the fence. They tried to chase the bull but they only aggravated him. Finally Dad walked down with a club in his hand and told them to follow him. He opened the gate and after a few cuss words in Norwegian, the pawing bull eased away. Dad had to go along with them as a protector while they inspected the herd.

Twice a year, spring and fall, the Indians traveled between the Crow Creek Indian Reservation, on the banks of the Missouri River in South Dakota, to Fort Totten Indian Reservation near Devils Lake, North Dakota. They would go north in the spring and back south again in the fall. The trail they followed passed about fifty yards west of our house. There was a grove of trees along the road, north of our yard, where they sometimes camped.

They would come in great numbers, some in covered wagons of various kinds, others on horseback, riding small Indian ponies. The children walked or ran behind with a number of dogs following them. This would go on for several days before they had all passed by.

Mother told us that Indians sometimes picked up white children and carried them along with them. This, of course, made us frightened so when they commenced moving by our place, Clara and I stayed within reach of the front door. One time an Indian boy and girl, about ten or twelve years of age, came to the house begging for milk. They didn't bring a container and mother didn't have one to give them milk in. They became very angry and scolded her but being they used their native tongue, we didn't know what they said

which was probably a good thing. They kept on scolding until Mother shut the door on them.

One time two young Indian braves rode up and asked for something to eat. Mother invited them in. They ate a good meal. When they had finished, they gave Mother a beautiful pair of beaded moccasins for Dad. He was very proud of them and kept them for many years. I believe Mother received something for herself too, but I can't remember what it was. I do remember that I was frightened and crawled under the bed when they came into the house. Clara, being a little braver, watched them from a distance.

Across the road and to the west of our house was the Daily quarter, a farm without buildings and only partly cultivated, with tall grass growing on the rest of the land. Clara and I once took a handful of matches and hid in this tall grass. We proceeded to light them and start a fire in the dry grass. We wanted to see what a prairie fire looked like. After we had the fire started we got scared and beat out the flames with Clara's petticoat and my shirt. Luckily for us it was a quiet afternoon with no wind. The fire burned slowly so it only burned a small area before we were able to put it out.

I can faintly remember Dad taking us to Lisbon to see a circus. I recall seeing the clowns, horseback riders, and elephants. My half-brother, Gust, had a job selling canes. He gave each of us one when we left. We thought the performers looked so beautiful in tights. The next day we found some yellow axle grease in the pump house. We smeared it all over our bodies, pretending we were wearing tights. I can remember how angry mother was. She really had to scrub to get it off.

Clara attended school for six weeks during the last spring we lived in Ransom County. The school house was about three-fourths of a mile south of our farm. She didn't like to go because there was an older boy who like to tease her and call her his girl. In the morning she would cry and refuse to go. Mother and I would walk part ways with her. On the last day of school she took me along. In the school yard some of the children were teasing her so I became angry and doubled up my fist and chased them. I can remember how proud I was of myself when they ran away. I am sure they were not as scared of me as they pretended to be. The teacher's name was Effie Henzel.

Up until this time Dad and Mother lived on rented farms, sharing part of the grain raised with the owner of the land. The crops had not been good so the returns for their hard work were meager. What little money they had was earned by milking cows and selling milk and butter.

There was homestead land to be filed on in central North Dakota and in the west. The railroads were advertising that a

prosperous future awaited settlers in the "Golden West." It was the ambition of the Scandinavian people to own their own farms. Pioneering was not new to them. Mother and Dad were anxious to own their own a piece of land and thus become independent even though they realized it would be a life of hardship, privation, and waiting. They had strong faith and bright hopes, confident that their modest ambitions would be achieved.

In the spring of 1902, after the crop was seeded, Dad bought some wooden slats and canvas to make up a covered wagon. When it was completed it looked like the prairie schooners used by the emigrants crossing the prairies. Mother boiled a ham, baked bread and packed a chest of food to take on the trip west. Dad was going to look for and file on a homestead claim. It would be a long trip by team and wagon, traveling by day and camping along the trail, letting the horses graze at night. The destination and country was unknown but the plan was to follow the Soo Line Railroad as far as Balfour, North Dakota, a distance of 225 miles. It was rumored that there was homestead land to be filed on south and west of there.

Finally the covered wagon was ready. One evening sacks of oats for the horses, bedding, and supplies were loaded. Early the next morning the chest of food was placed in the wagon. Frank and Bill, our horses, were harnessed and hitched to the wagon. After bidding us goodbye, Dad climbed in the driver's seat and set out on the long trip to locate a new home. The last thing Mother told him was, "Now be sure to find us a piece of land."

Mother had a girl stay with us while Dad was gone. Her name was Tolomina. She had lice and looked as if she never combed her hair. We all got lousy. Mother made her clean up and finally got rid of the lice. She admitted that it was a difficult job and took a lot of persistence.

I do not recall just how long Dad was gone, but to us it seemed a long time. Clara and I were scared when he came back as we had taken apart a harness that he had hanging in the barn and couldn't get it back together, however, Dad just laughed at this.

Dad had filed on a claim fourteen miles south of Balfour, built a sod shack, and put up some hay for the winter. That homestead on the prairie was later to become a part of all of us.

That same summer, after Dad came home, Mother's sister, Helga, came from Norway and stayed with us until her marriage to Ludwig Larson. Mother had a reception for them at our house. Later that evening some of the neighbors came to "charivari" them. This was the custom in those days. It meant that they would come around the house and make as much noise as possible by ringing cow bells, pounding on wash boilers or tine pans, etc. They would not stop until the bride and groom appeared at the door and invited them in for coffee and cake. The groom also gave them a few dollars with which to buy drinks after they returned to town.

MOVING TO THE HOMESTEAD

After the crops had been harvested, the threshing finished, and the grain hauled to the elevator, preparations had to be made to move. Some of the stock was sold in order to make room in the immigrant car for the milk cows, chickens, farm machinery, household goods, and horses. It was October before the wagons were loaded and the double box was piled high with furniture, machinery, and other necessary belongings ready for the trip to Fingal, where we were to load a car on the Soo Line to take us to Balfour.

It was a beautiful fall morning. We were thankful for this, as we had nearly twenty-five miles to go with our heavy loads, and driving the cattle that far would take a long time. We were up early but got a late start, as it took a long time to bid the Bergs goodbye.

Finally we were on the way. Mother and we two children sat on the spring seat on the double box of the wagon. The wagon was drawn by Frank and Bill, the same bay draft horses with which Dad had made the trip in the covered wagon. Dad drove the wagon ahead of us with a team he had borrowed. My half brother, Gust, rode Prince, our Indian pony, driving the cattle on ahead.

We got a very slow start as the neighbors came out to the road to say goodbye when we passed their homes. One old couple, August and Augusta Berg, stopped us and it was a long time before we were able to get going on our way again. By the time we got away from the neighbors and could move right along the sun was high, and the folks began to realize it would be late before they got to Fingal that evening. I remember we passed many big farm homes and barns as we traveled along the way. In the evening, before the sun went down, clouds began gathering and it was threatening to rain, a few drops falling at times.

At this time of the year the days are short and after sundown it got so dark that Mother was unable to see the road. We still had a long way to go and the cattle and horses were getting tired. Dad inquired at several farm homes along the road, if we could stop there over night. Although they had big houses and barns they said they didn't have enough room. Mother said later on, "I have never before or since met such unfriendly people."

Once Mother missed a turn in the road and got onto a trail. The horses were about to go down a deep railroad cut when

Gust came riding back to see what had become of us. Luckily he came at that moment and stopped the horses from going over the bank, as just a minute later a long freight train came rushing by. After Gust got us back on the right road again, we continued on our way.

After a slight rain the farmers began burning straw stacks. The country was level and you could see them burning for miles around. This helped light up the road for us, as some of them were quite near by. Mother tried to keep Clara and me awake by talking and pointing out the burning straw stacks. We passed the village of Nome and she pointed out the lights of Lucca about six miles away. I cannot remember getting to Fingal that night. I slept through all of that. We all slept in the immigrant car of the freight train that night.

The following morning the men got to work loading the immigrant car. The furniture, household goods, and machinery, with the crate of chickens piled on top, were put in one end of the car, and this section was boarded up. The milk cows were tied along the walls of the other end with the young stock loose among them. That section of the car was then boarded up, leaving a space in the middle, between the doors, for the three horses. The back door was closed but the door from which we loaded remained open. It was later boarded up, leaving a space between each board to provide air for the stock.

It wasn't long after the car was loaded that we climbed into the caboose. Gust said goodbye, taking the team and wagon that Dad had borrowed back with him. The conductor gave the signal to start, the whistle from the engine sounded, and the train slowly started to move, gaining speed as it travelled. We were on our way. Dad had wanted Mother and us children to ride on the passenger train but she refused, saying, "We need to save on expenses." We traveled the rest of that day and night.

The following day we arrived in Harvey, our first stop. This being a railroad terminal, the engineer and the rest of the train crew got off and a new crew took over. We were told there would be quite a long delay, so although it was a cold, windy morning we walked over to the depot. There we saw our first Russians. Some were standing and some were sitting on the platform leaning their backs against the walls of the depot. All had long beards and wore sheep skin coats. They were breaking chunks of bread from large loaves, eating raw salt pork along with it and at the same time waving their arms as they talked. Clara and I were surprised to see that Russians were people. When the folks had talked about Russians, we got the impression that they were some sort of animal, such as bears or wolves. Little did we then know that later on some of them would be our playmates and close neighbors.

When the train pulled into Balfour that evening, one of the first people we met was Mr. Pfeiffer. He asked us over to their house, where we stayed while Dad unloaded the livestock and other belongings from the car. We later learned that the Pfeiffer's had a grocery store in town. We greatly appreciated their kindness and later did much of our trading at their store. They had a small house, so we slept at the home of Pat Gallagher that night, the land agent in Balfour. His job was to locate land for the homestead seekers, charging a commission for each transaction completed. Some of these agents would show the same quarter, a nice level piece of land, to several different parties, using a different description each time in order to make a deal. Later when the homesteader came to locate and settle on his land, he found that according to the description, it was an entirely different piece of real estate. Often it was a mile or two from the one shown him by the agent. Mr. Gallagher's fee for locating a homestead for Dad was \$10.00. They had a large family. One of the girls, Maggie, had a homestead about three miles south of ours. She and one of her sisters used to walk the seventeen miles from Balfour to the homestead. After we moved to our homestead they used to stop and rest at our house on the way out.

The following morning Pete Glein, the lumber man, asked us over to their home for breakfast. We found the people of Balfour very friendly and willing to extend a helping hand to the new arrivals in the community. After a fine breakfast at the Glein home and an exchange of greetings, we finished loading the wagon with bedding and household goods. Some of our belongings were left in an old warehouse by the railroad track. When Dad came back to get the articles he had left in this warehouse, he found that someone had entered it and damaged whatever they hadn't taken. We were told a man nicknamed "Skunk" Johnson had a blind pig there until he was arrested by the sheriff from Towner. The term "blind pig" was used for a place where illegal liquor was sold. "Skunk" was a big Swede with a peg leg, who made his living bootlegging.

With Clara and me on the front seat beside her, Mother again drove the team pulling the wagon as we travelled the final fourteen miles of our journey. Dad rode Prince and drove the cattle before him. It was a nice fall day and the trail we followed was a well-marked wagon road. On places the ruts were dug deep by the heavy loads of immigrant trains, military detachments, and parties of travelers crossing the prairies. The road led directly to our place, crossing our land and going south a few rods from where our house was built. Later it was the main road for settlers hauling grain to Balfour and bringing back coal and provisions on the return trip.

Our home, being about half way between Balfour and the settlement to the south, became a regular stopping place for coffee

and cake and for overnight stops by many. As we traveled the fourteen miles from Balfour for the first time, it was noted that the terrain was rolling and became more hilly the nearer we came to our future home. This was in contrast to the flat country and wooded hills of eastern North Dakota. The houses along the way were sod huts which were plastered with brown clay on the outside to keep out the winter winds. Other homes were squat, ugly looking tar paper shacks.

That afternoon as we were about to pass the George Peister farm home which was one mile north of our homestead, George came out to the road and invited us to come and stay with them for a while. He informed us that herds of cattle, running loose, had rubbed against the sod shack Dad had put up. The front end was caved in and we would be unable to live in it until it was repaired. We gladly accepted the kind invitation. They had a very small house and Rosie, his wife, was a much better farmer than housekeeper. She worked like a man outside; hauling hay, fixing fences, and doing the many farm chores. This suited George being he wasn't too ambitious. He liked to smoke his pipe and carry on a conversation from morning to night, if anyone would listen to him. Mother pitched in and did the house work while we were there so we managed very well until we could move into our own home. Rosie's two sisters, Barbara and Lydia Krause, use to come over often. Barbara always carried a 22 rifle and used to shoot gophers. We were scared of her as she used to tease us by telling us that she would shoot us.

We now had our first experience of using "cow chips" and the pressed "cow coal" that the Russians used for fuel. The cow chips were dried cow manure, picked up in the pastures and on the prairie and put in sacks. It was then hauled home in wagon boxes and stored in a shed until it was used for fuel in the cook stove.

To make the "cow coal", fresh cow manure was hauled into a pile. In the spring they would then cover it with straw, wet it down with water and drive a team of horses over it, tramping it until it was well mixed. After this was done they would let it lay several weeks to bake and dry in the hot sun. It was then cut into six-inch squares with a spade and stacked in pyramids by the barn. This cow coal would burn for a long time while the cow chips would burn out in a hurry. There were so many ashes from both that it is no wonder there were ashes on the floor, especially from the stove to the door. Mother was not too successful in using this fuel. The first time she baked bread at Peisters, the bread would not get brown. It was white both on top and bottom, but we ate it.

Rather than repair the sod house, Dad and Mother decided to buy lumber and build; using the sod house for a storage and coal shed. It was not much of a house, only a 12' x 16' shack with shiplap walls covered with tar paper. The only door was

located in the middle of the long wall, facing south. There were two windows, one on the east and one on the west wall. The two by fours and walls on the inside were covered with brown building paper while the ceiling was enclosed with ceiling board. The floor was six-inch floor board with no finish or covering of any kind.

This single room served as kitchen, bedroom, and living room. The cellar was accessible through a narrow trap door in the floor and a rather perilous stairway descended to the dirt floor below. Despite these inconveniences, Mother was pleased that we could have a home to call our own. It was a happy day for us when we moved in: October 12, 1902.

THE HOMESTEAD

The homestead consisted of one hundred-sixty (160) acres, located in what was then McLean County and described as follows: The southeast quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$) of the southeast quarter (SE $\frac{1}{4}$), section thirty (30), east half (E $\frac{1}{2}$) of the northeast (NE $\frac{1}{4}$) quarter, section thirty-one (31), and the northwest quarter (NW $\frac{1}{4}$) of the northwest quarter (NW $\frac{1}{4}$) of section thirty-two (32), all in Township one hundred fifty (150), range seventy-seven (77) north.

McLean County, due to its large size was later divided and then the section we lived in became part of Sheridan County. The land was treeless and waterless grass land on a rolling northern elevation. Our house was built on a hill from where we could see many miles of farm land to the north and east, including the villages of Balfour, Drake, and Anamoose, a distance of from fourteen to twenty-two miles. Beyond us, to the south, the country was rough and hilly with sloughs and small meadows in between the hills. The south forty acres of our farm was used for pasture. It extended into this hill country.

After having our belongings, cattle, feed, and machinery moved, and some coal hauled into the shed, Dad hauled a load of lumber from Balfour for a barn, or rather a shed to protect the stock during the winter. This was built from rough lumber, the boards running up and down. This building was west of the house with the door facing the east. Peter Johnson came to help with the rafters and roof. Pete and his wife, Jonette, were friends of Mother and Dad. They came from Ft. Ransom, North Dakota, during the summer and settled on a farm about eight miles southwest of ours. The men finished the building by four o'clock and Mother invited Pete in for coffee before he started for home. As the men were coming into the house, a wagon drove up with two men sitting on the spring seat. They had a saddle pony tied to the side of the team pulling the wagon. They wanted to know where they could find water for the horses. Dad told them to drive to the Wehr farm, a quarter of a mile west. There, in a coulee, was a water tank supplied with water from a spring. This tank was always full so they would be able to water their horses there. As these two men started for the Wehr farm, Dad remarked, "Those men look lik cowboys. It is queer that they had to inquire about water for as a rule they are well-acquainted with the country and the location of water". As we entered the house our two horses, Bill and Frank, could be seen grazing on a hillside about a half mile from the Wehr farm. Prince and Pete Johnson's big roan mare were grazing near the barn. After lunch Pete hitched his roan to the single buggy and left for home. Later in the evening, Prince

was led into the barn and tied up. Dad walked up to the hill, where the other two horses had been grazing, but was unable to find them. When he returned, he recalled that the last time the horses were seen, the two men in the wagon were headed toward them. We then realized that they may have been horse thieves. The following week we hunted; Dad riding around to distant places, Mother and we children climbed the hills closer to home, but to no avail. We were told that a stray team had come into Sykeston, this being about half way between our homestead and our old home. Thinking they may have started back, Dad made a trip there, but they were not our horses.

We were now left with only one horse. The total cash on hand was seventeen dollars and winter was close at hand with coal, clothing, and groceries to buy. Before a crop could be harvested the following year, horses would have to be bought to break the land. However, there was one consolation, we had our cattle, including seven milk cows coming fresh during the fall and winter. They would provide us with butter, cream, cheese, and milk. Because of these few head of cattle and by economizing and depriving ourselves of everything except bare necessities of life, we survived our first winter on the homestead.

It wasn't long before the snow came and Dad repaired the jumper, pulled by one horse, in order to have some method of transportation besides walking. Before now Mother had become accustomed to the art of burning cow chips of which there was an abundance on the prairie. We picked sacks full, carrying them home on our backs and emptying them in a corner of the sod shed. Later, using a one horse hitch to pull the wagon, we picked a wagon box full and hauled it home that way. Winter came early, with cold northwest winds sweeping the swirly snow around the buildings. It wasn't long before our supply of fuel was exhausted.

There was lignite coal to be had at the Masteller Mine which was located in the Dogden Buttes about eleven miles west of us. The coal was reached by entering a tunnel or shaft dug into the hillside, extending to the bed of coal. A horse was led into the mine, pulling a stoneboat with a box on it. The coal was loosened by a heavy pointed iron, wielded by means of a wooden handle inserted into the eye between the two ends. This iron was known as a pick. After the coal was loosened, it was loaded into the box by scoop shovels, pulled to the surface by a horse, and then shoveled into the wagon box. After the first cold spell, the little coal we had was gone. With Prince and a borrowed horse hitched to a bob sleigh with a wagon box on it, Dad left early one morning for a load of lignite. There were no regular roads then, only trails across the country to the mine. These trails were generally quite straight, except for detours around steep hills, big boulders, sloughs, and the Murray Coulee; all of which added to extra miles and difficult traveling. By trotting the horses on the level stretches where the snow wasn't too deep, Dad was able

to reach the mine early that forenoon. In spite of the early arrival, there were several sleighs ahead of him. Knowing it would be some time before his wagon box could be loaded, he unhitched the team, watered and fed them the hay and oats that he had thrown into the wagon box before leaving home. After this was done, he proceeded to help load the wagon ahead, as was customary. It was hard work but everyone was sociable so the job was not unpleasant. Those who already had their wagons loaded continued to help the rest until such time as additional men arrived to help. Most homesteaders were willing to work hard just for the sake of a few hours of conversation.

It was late in the afternoon before Dad got his wagon loaded and was ready to leave for home. By then the horses were well rested so with reasonable luck he expected to be home by dark. The first part of the trail was easy traveling so he made good time, although frequent rest periods were necessary, especially on steep inclines. As the day wore on, a cold wind came up from the northwest, drifting the light snow across the prairie and covering the trail. The sun soon sank below the horizon. The darkness made it extremely difficult to follow the trail. The last miles of the trail had drifted over completely. Dad walked along side of the sleigh to lighten the load. He had to stamp his feet in the snow and flog his arms in an effort to keep warm. It was now pitch dark and impossible to follow a trail. Dad decided to put his trust in the horses with the hope that instinct would take them home. Suddenly the horses stopped. Unable to start them again, he felt his way around the sleigh to investigate. To his astonishment, the team had found their way home and had stopped beside the barn. Overjoyed and greatly relieved at being home, Dad unhitched the team whose heaving flanks were covered with freezing perspiration. Although steaming, they were already shivering from the cold, which they could no longer ward off without protection from the wind.

After getting the horses in the barn, Dad lost no time in getting into the house, walking in with sheepskin cap and overcoat covered with ice and fine snow. Icicles had formed on his whiskers, his eyebrows were covered with frost and his overshoes were frozen to his feet. Needless to say, we were happy to see him. Mother brought in some wood from the shed to get the fire in the cook stove going and Dad brought in a bucket of lignite from the load. The coal was so wet that it took a long time before it would burn well. However, Mother managed to make supper and we were all thankful that there was fuel again to keep us warm.

It was a long hard winter but we managed to have plenty to eat and enough coal on hand to keep warm. The wind would blow the fine drifting snow through the cracks in the walls. To stop this and to keep the potatoes from freezing in the cellar, Dad hauled manure around the house, piling it up against the walls as high as the window frames. It was customary to do this around homes and barns. It would keep the wind out and maintain the heat.

When spring finally came, Dad commenced digging rocks on the east forty. He cleared ten acres with Prince pulling the stone boat, hauling the stones to a pile on a knoll. The stone boat was a crude sled made of slats of wood or fence posts which were tapered on the front end. These were used as runners with planks nailed over them as a platform. It was used for transportation, hauling rocks, and water barrels. A single tree or whipple tree was attached in front, to which the traces or tugs of the harness were fastened.

With only the one horse and no money with which to buy another, there now was the problem of breaking up the few acres of cleared land. After discussing the problem, Mother said, "You used to drive oxen back in Minnesota, why don't you break the brindie cow? With Prince and the cow hitched to the walking plow you could take your time and break those ten acres you have cleared. Then you can seed them into flax." Dad replied dryly, "Yes, and they were the orneriest animals I have ever seen in all my days. Driving a cow would be worse." "You will need patience with them," Mother agreed. "However, Prince is a steady horse and once he gets used to it you should make out all right. Besides, we won't have to buy feed for the cow. It necessary she can get along very well on whatever food she can pick up on the prairie." "I suppose you are right," Dad admitted grudgingly, "but I hate to go through the experience of driving that cow alongside a horse. Don't blame me if I become impossible to live with before this is finished."

Dad made a harness to fit the cow. In order to break her in he commenced hitching her with Prince onto the wagon. At first it didn't work out too well. Prince became almost as disgusted as Dad because of the cow's slow stride. Prince would turn to one side and bite her on the ribs. In time, however, they were able to walk together at a steady gate. It was slow and tiresome trying to break up the land in this manner. Because of the heavy load, pulling the plow, only a few rounds could be made each day.

In the meantime, Erick Erickson had moved out to his homestead, south of our farm, bringing with him four oxen, a team of mules and a horse. One day, driving by, he offered to loan us the horse until Dad had finished breaking the ten acres he had cleared. The offer was gladly accepted. The sod was soon broken up, the seeding completed, and the field dragged to cover the seed.

During the summer more lumber was hauled from Balfour and siding was put on the house. The interior was plastered, covering up all the cracks and making it considerably warmer for the coming winter. An excavation was scraped in the hillside, west of the house, for a chicken coop. The front was made of sod, with the roof of long slender poles covered with hay and dirt.

Dad spent much time visiting the ranchers, looking for a mate for Prince. After many visits, he bought a light gray four-year-old mare at Murray's ranch. She was a bronco, very shy and only

partly harness broke. Because of the demand for horses, the ranchers were taking advantage of the new settlers by asking unreasonable prices for them. This horse cost Dad \$135.00 but we had to have her regardless of the price.

We now had to decide on a name for our new horse. Many were suggested but none definitely agreed on. Being a bronco and not used to coming into a barn, she would stop every time she was led up to the door. Only after strenuous pushing from the rear and pulling on the halter rope would she finally step across the beam and be led into the stable to her stall. One day as she was being led in, after the usual pushing and pulling, she was about half way through the entrance when a gust of wind blew the door shut, striking her on the side. She made one leap into her stall. After this, as long as she lived, she would stop before entering the door, then rush through, making it in one long jump. Mother said she would "fly" through the door, so we started calling her "Fly" and the name stayed with her.

During the following two years, many homesteaders came looking for land. It wasn't long before almost all the vacant quarters were filed on. Sod or tar paper shacks were built. Very few were bigger than the ten by twelve shacks that most of the homesteaders lived in while proving up their land. Many of the homesteaders were bachelors or single women and there were also quite a few fly-by-night settlers, anxious for an opportunity to sell their relinquishment to anyone caring to make an offer. Others came with the intention of making this their home. Some of these homesteaders were the Ole Hamnes family, the Knute and Louis "Lars" Monge families, also John and Helmer Dalos, and the Erick Erickson, Christ Furness, Walter Bjorhus, and Peter Preisinger families. They were followed later by Nels Persen, John Lindblom, A. P. Olsen, and their two sons, Emery and Edgar.

There was a lot of hard work to be done before crops could be raised. Most of the land was hilly and covered with rocks. Only small strips were cleared and broken up the first year. Digging rocks was by far the hardest work connected with homesteading. They had to be dug out with a pickaxe and crowbar, then loaded on stoneboats or wagons and hauled in piles. The job of breaking up the prairie would have been comparatively easy had it not been for the great number of rocks that had to be cleared off before a plow could be put to it. The rock problem continued for a long time. New ones seemed to come up with each plowing to take the place of the ones that were previously cleared off.

Some of the bachelors would come and stay on their claim a few weeks during the summer (the minimum time required to prove up the claim) and then go back east again to their jobs. They returned again the following year. Erma Sanford, Ole Johnson, and Harry Dodge came from Devils Lake and homesteaded. Erma filed on

a forty, Ole on eighty acres, and Harry, one hundred sixty acres. Erma worked at the Great Northern depot in Devils Lake and would spend her vacations living in the shack. However, she spent most of her time at our place as she was afraid to stay alone at night. She was always laughing and full of fun so we two children enjoyed her visits. The prairies were practically alive with gophers and she would feed the ones that came near her shack. By the time that she left, some of the gophers would be so round, fat, and tame that they would come and eat out of her hand. We had to leave Shep, our dot, at home when we visited her or he would have put a quick end to her "pets". Ole was a barber at Devils Lake. He would come over to see Erma, bringing Harry along. Harry and Ole were close friends and almost inseparable. They were an odd pair. Harry short and serious; Ole tall, slim and full of the dickens. Ole was easy-going and flush with his money; Harry, on the other hand, was quite conservative. He used to tell Dad, "Ole doesn't know the value of a dollar".

I remember the first time Erma brought them to our home. Mother as usual proceeded to cook a pot of coffee, building the fire in the cook stove with sticks of wood, using cow chips instead of coal. She filled the stove from time to time from the heaping pails of dry chips standing beside the stove. The stove let out smoke with a distinctive aroma every time she lifted the lid. Erma told us later that she was quite embarrassed as the two men had never seen or heard of this kind of fuel. Mother and Erma laughed about it later, saying, "Although they didn't like the smell, they ate a good meal and seemed to enjoy the coffee". Another time they came from Balfour, Harry driving a spruced up pair of prancing bay horses, hitched to a shining surray. Harry was bashful around girls, but he did have one along that time.

Ole hired Pete Shaffer with his steam outfit, to break up part of his eighty acres. It was an old Advance Rumley coal burner. Behind it he pulled eight breaker bottoms. He had a crew of four men; the engineer, fireman, tankman, and plowman. Pete bossed the outfit. Ole had the rocks dug and hauled but there were still quite a few large one missed by the diggers. Whenever the plows would hit one of these large boulders, a breakdown would occur, resulting in a delay of several hours. They did, however, finish in time to get a crop of late flax seeded. By the time it started growing, the hot south winds burned it so very little was harvested. We all missed Erma after she proved up her claim and failed to make her regular trips to the shack. She and Ole later married and made their home in South Dakota.

During our third spring on the homestead we built onto the shack by adding a 12 x 14 kitchen to the south side. This gave us considerably more room. For the kitchen we bought a cast iron laundry stove with a round oven connected to the stove pipe between the stove and ceiling. A second-hand cream separator also became part of our furnishings.

It was during this winter that Mother told us that a little brother or sister would soon arrive at our house. This, of course, made us very happy and we could hardly wait for the new baby to arrive. Early one morning we awoke to see mother lying in bed crying with Mrs. Reckenberger, a midwife, and Dad standing beside her. Dad called us over and they told us a little girl had arrived but the angels had taken her to heaven. (She was stillborn) I recall, later in the day, Dad led us to a basket in the kitchen, lifted the white sheet and let us touch her cold little cheeks. That same afternoon Dad asked Louise Monge to build a coffin. The next day Mr. Monge brought a little pine box, painted black and lined with white velvet. Before the lid was screwed on all of us kissed her hand. Dad, George Peister, and one of the Ackermans took her to Rosenfield cemetery for burial. We children were too young to understand the sorrow that had entered our home.

PIONEER MOTHER

Her helping hand was always first
 To render any aid she could;
 Her voice was always raised in praise
 Her words were wise and good,
 Dear Mother, since you've gone away,
 The ones you loved so true
 Try hard to carry on the way
 We know you'd want us to.

Mother was always the first one up in the morning and the last one to bed at night. Her first job was to lay the fire in the kitchen stove. From early childhood in distant Norway she had been taught to work, spin yarn, knit and sew, mend and darn, cook and scrub. She believed that a divine providence would be pleased by her efforts. She interpreted the little incidents of the day as warnings or approvals of her stewardship. Her days were full of toil but she never complained. Through the week, from morning until night, she hurried about her many tasks.

Always ambitious and economical, she wanted her family to have the best of everything. In the morning we stayed in bed until Mother prepared coffee and served each of us a cup of it, with a doughnut or cookie. This was just a primer for a hearty breakfast that came later, after we had done the milking, separating, and the other chores. Our breakfast usually consisted of oatmeal, cream and bread, (bread covered with thick cream and sugar) some form of meat, (often sliced dried beef or head cheese) coffee, and cookies. She was an excellent cook and took great pride in turning out bread, rolls, and cake as light as a feather. It took constant work to keep her family supplied as all of us were hearty eaters. There was no bread to be bought in the stores at that time and if there had been I am sure she would not have bought any. She would have considered that the extreme of laziness and extravagance. She mixed and set the yeast in the evening, usually twice a week. There were always about ten loaves at each baking, besides buns and cinnamon rolls.

Butter was churned once a week with a hand-operated barrel churn, turned end over end with a crank. After a few turns of the barrel, a cork was pulled out to release the air pressure. This had to be repeated several times. All of us children enjoyed turning the churn but sometimes we would forget to pull the cork. The air pressure would blow out the cork and before we were able to stop turning, a ring of cream splashed around the room and a puddle accumulated on the floor. Shep and

the cat were then called in to lick up the spilled cream. Shep would lick away greedily, stopping at times to lick his paws and stare at the cat who had, with caution, edged up to get her share of the treat. After Shep and the cat had done their part, the floor was wiped clean and churning was resumed until butter was formed. Mother mixed salt into the butter and packed some of it in five and ten pound crocks to be delivered to customers in town and sold at the store. Some of her customers were cowboys, riding over on their saddle ponies to buy butter, eggs, and bread.

When Mother came from Norway she brought with her a foot treadle spinning wheel. It was made by her father and given to her as a fairwell gift. She would buy wool by the pound and with the help of us children, clean and card it, then spin it into yarn. I remember happily holding many a skein of yarn while she wound it into a ball. She would then knit mittens, stockings, caps, and sweaters. Besides knitting, she did all the sewing for my sisters and me. The first "store bought" suit was purchased for me when I was confirmed.

Mother was the neighborhood midwife. Whenever a new baby was to be born, they came for her. She would be given an advance notice of the approximate time the new arrival was expected. When we saw a team of horses on buggy or sleigh come galloping across the prairie trail, she would get ready in a hurry and was on her way. Sometimes the call would come in the middle of the night but usually it was expected so there was no long delay before starting the return trip. She would be back home in two or three days. After a few days there would be a return trip to see how the mother and new baby were getting along. She would always bring a kettle of fruit soup for the mother and a small home made gift for the baby.

We used kerosene lamps and lanterns. If the light was turned too high, the glass chimney would become covered with soot and Mother would have to wash and shine the chimney again. Later we had a gasoline lamp. This had to have air pumped into the tank and before lighting the mantles or burner, it had to be heated with a torch dipped in wood alcohol. It had two mantles that were very fragile. The moths sometimes fluttered against the light, crumbling the mantles. We always had to have an extra supply on hand.

Our baths were taken in a round, galvanized wash tub by the kitchen stove. The water was heated in the wash boiler. The smaller children were usually the first to have their bath. Quite often there was quite a fuss about who was to be next.

We had to haul water in barrels from the Wehr farm for the Saturday evening baths and the Monday morning clothes washing. The clothes were washed by hand on a rubbing board. The white clothes were then put into a copper boiler containing soapy

water and boiled to get them whiter. After rinsing, they were hung on the clothes line to dry. In winter they would freeze stiff as a board and would still be in that form when they were returned to the house.

Mother planted a garden every year. It took two or three years to get rid of the sod and many times the weeds would choke out the seeds she planted. Other years there would be a drought and due to this, the potatoes would be no larger than marbles. When conditions were favorable we would haul twenty bushels of potatoes into our cellar. This and plenty of canned vegetables would last us through the winter.

THE PRAIRIE FIRE

It was one of the usual fall days during threshing time. The morning was clear and bright with a light wind blowing from the northwest. We had had very little rain so the prairie grass and brush was crisp and dry.

Dad was out threshing, running the steam engine on John Wehr's threshing rig. The rig on which he was working was threshing for a farmer about five miles northeast of our home. Mother, with the help of us children, had to take care of the livestock on the farm, herding and watering the cattle, milking the cows, feeding the pigs, calves, and chickens.

As the day progressed, the wind picked up, becoming stronger. By noon a hard gale was blowing from the northwest. By early afternoon we noticed a gray cloud of smoke blowing in from over the hills directly to the northwest of our farm, originating about where the town of Butte is now located, a distance of about nine miles.

Was this a prairie fire? With this strong wind, and the grass and brush as dry as powder, we were in danger as there were no plowed fields or firebreaks to protect our buildings and hay stacks. The dark clouds of smoke kept getting wider and thicker, soon reaching out to cover the sun and extending high in the sky. Now there was no question about it. The one thing we feared more than anything else, a prairie fire, was heading our way. There were no roads, streams, or plowed fields to stop it and the dry prairie grass was growing right up to our hay stacks and buildings, including our house. What would happen to the cattle that were out on the prairie grazing?

It wasn't long before we could see flames coming over the hills west of the Murray ranch. The fire had now spread out and was burning a swath close to two miles wide, spreading wider and wider as it traveled our way. Billows of gray smoke now covered the sky like dark clouds before a thunder storm. The flames leaped forward like waves of water, driven by the strong wind.

What were we to do? There was not a horse or wagon on the farm that we could use to escape with. We didn't even have a well on the farm to supply water with which to fight the fire. There was nothing for Mother to do but hope and pray for help to come or for the wind to go down.

We could see that Stephen Fedorenko, our nearest neighbor, living one mile to the northwest, had come home. With his five horses

and a gang plow he was plowing a firebreak around his farm. One mile to the north, George Peister and the Ackerman boys were plowing a firebreak around the Peister farm using three horses and a sulky breaking plow.

About this time we saw Dad coming, riding on horseback as fast as Prince was able to travel. He stopped on the way to exchange a few words with George Peister. When Dad arrived he gathered old gunny sacks from the granary and a pitch fork from the barn. The sacks were to be used for fighting the fire by dipping them in pails of water, then pounding them on the fire to extinguish the flame. The same results were obtained by putting wet sacks or squars of hard sod, about two inches thick, on the pitchfork tines and pushing them along the fire line. A barrel was placed on a stoneboat and Prince hitched to it. With this we hauled a barrel of water from the well on the Wehr farm about one-fourth mile away.

By now George Peister had arrived with his horses and sulky plow. They plowed some furrows around the west side of our farm site in the form of a quarter moon. The furrows were about two rods apart. After this was completed, the men burned the grass between the furrows. This provided a firebreak two rods wide where the fire would strike first and hardest. After this they started a fire on the prairie grass on the opposite side of the firebreak from the buildings, letting it burn against the wind, toward the fast-approaching flames. (This is known as a backfire) This they let burn until it had burned around the entire farm site, including the part not protected by the firebreak. They kept the flames under control with wet gunny sacks and pitch forks.

The men worked frantically. The fire was closing in rapidly with flames leaping three to ten feet into the air. It made a noise like a giant bulldozer bearing down on them. The smoke almost choked the men, with the heat almost too hot to face. Rabbits were passing by ahead of the flames and game birds could be seen flying to safety. By the time the flames reached our farm, our backfire had burned wide enough to make good protection around our property. The men had to stand by with water buckets to protect the haystacks from flying sparks and to put out the fires that started in some of the tall grass next to the buildings.

We located our cattle north of our farm where they had strayed beyond the burned area.

This fire raged for several days, traveling many miles south and west of our farm, destroying farm buildings, crops, haystacks, grazing land and some livestock. It left the land burned black without feed for the cattle. Every piece of upland grass for miles around us was burned. The only place the stock could find anything to eat was in the sloughs. They would wade out into the water and eat the top of the tall slough grass as far down as the water line.

The sky was heavy with smoke for several days. When a hay stack or shack caught fire, billows of heavy black smoke could be seen extending high into the sky. At night the countryside was lit up with a ring of light extending for many miles around the outside of the rim of fire.

There were several prairie fires in the years that followed. One started from a threshing engine that was working on our farm. It burned for three or four days, but there was none as destructive as this first one. We always had a firebreak to protect us from the danger of another prairie fire.

= RANCHERS AND COWBOYS

At the time we homesteaded, ranchers had taken up residence on the government land in the hills south and west of our farm. They lived in small shacks and had built long narrow feeding sheds as shelter and protection for their livestock against the cold winter winds and blizzards.

Many of these ranchers had from one to three hundred horses and a few cattle grazing on the free land. They were reluctant to give up this free grazing land of which they had taken advantage. To discourage homesteaders they would sometimes at night graze their stock on the homesteader's hay land or on the few acres he had seeded. At times they would drive the farmer's stock into the hills if they could do so without being seen. When the cattle were finally found there might be one or two head missing. If the rancher's herd could be located the missing stock would usually be found among them. The cowboys tending the herd would never argue as to the ownership of the animals, saying, "They are a couple of strays. We don't know how they got here."

The ranchers with the largest herds were Covette, Murray, and the England brothers. Covette had a horse ranch located southeast of us. His herd wasn't too large, maybe 60 to 100 head, but it was considered the finest herd in the country. His horses were well kept and larger than the average range horse. Being they were halter broke, they sold for about \$400.00 a team.

Murray's ranch was located in a coulee at what is now known as the Kostenko farm. His herd consisted of about 200 broncos besides several head of cattle. He had two or three cowboys herding the stock in the hills south of the ranch. Once, some of the horses broke into George Shattun's oat field. Shattun managed to drive some of them into his corral. When two cowboys came looking for them, he demanded five dollars damages. Art Norberg, one of the cowboys, cracked his rawhide blacksnake around Shattun's legs, making him fall against his shack. By this time the other cowboy had opened the gate and released the horses. Once in the shack, Shattun grabbed his single barrel shotgun and fired a blast after the fleeing cowboys. A few pellets penetrated the skin on Art's shoulder. We bought a bronco from Murraray, paying \$135.00 for it.

The England brothers had by far the largest herd of horses and cattle. The livestock roamed over several sections of

grazing land which extended far into the hills to the south of us. The ranch house and feeding sheds were located close to the only big lake in the region, later named England Lake.

Their brother-in-law, McDonald, was one of the cowboys. The homesteaders considered him a ring-leader among the cattle thieves who operated in the territory. Dad and Mother thought it was the England brothers and McDonald who stole their team of horses, Frank and Bill.

I recall one day McDonald rode up to our house on his way to Balfour. He had seven head of cattle with him. He asked Mother if she would prepare a meal for him. Mother, who never refused food to anyone, said she would be glad to. Dismounting from his saddle pony, he handed me the reins and told me to use the horse and keep an eye on the cattle while he ate. At that time I had never ridden a saddle pony. As luck would have it, the cattle did not stray so I didn't have to attempt my first horseback ride on this strange horse. The following day he rode up to the house and asked if we had seen anyone driving those cattle. Later we learned the owners had trailed him and recovered the stolen stock at the Balfour stock yards. He was later located hiding in the hills and sentenced to the state penitentiary for cattle rustling. Maybe I should consider myself fortunate in not being arrested as an accessory to the crime.

The cowboys as a rule, were easy going and not overly ambitious. Most of their time was spent lying on a hillside sleeping with their saddle ponies grazing close by. They got up only when absolutely necessary to round up the herd or chase them out of a farmer's grain field.

It was always a thrill for us children to see the cowboys come riding on their saddle ponies, dressed in their leather jackets, chaps, and with spurs on their boots. They would stop at our house occasionally to buy eggs, butter, and homemade bread. We found them to be quiet and polite. Many times they gave Mother twenty-five or fifty cents more than the price she asked.

As the homesteaders moved in, fencing and breaking up patches of land, the ranchers and cowboys were gradually squeezed out to become only a legend on the Dakota prairies.

COUNTRY DANCES

Although most of the farm homes consisted of only a shack with a lean-to for a bedroom or kitchen, the Saturday night dances were ^{coming} during the winter months. The dancing continued all night and into the wee hours of the morning. This was the only entertainment the homesteaders had besides card-playing and story telling. We never had these dances in our home as Mother did not approve.

The dances were always crowded with the old as well as the young coming for the evening's fun. In order to provide as much room as possible, they usually moved all of the furniture outside or had it piled in another room. The only furniture that was left was a couple of chairs in one corner for the fiddlers. Those who didn't dance stood up against the wall to save space. There was always a shortage of lady partners so there were no wallflowers, regardless of the lady's attractions or lack of them. At midnight there was the usual intermission for coffee and lunch, furnished by the hostess.

The common dances were the always popular waltz, the two-step, polka, square dance, schottische, and three-step. The floors were made of six-inch flooring so corn meal was sprinkled on it to make dancing easier and to save on shoe leather.

Ole Hamness and John Dalos were the fiddlers. Later on it was Ole Hamnes and John Hendrickson. Ole was near-sighted and wore glasses with very thick lenses. He had a red handle-bar mustache, twisted to a point on both ends. He chewed snuff and so had to have a spittoon by his chair while he was playing, a pinch of snuff being a necessity after each dance. The older men had their intoxicating drinks, alcohol mixed with water and sugar, and sprinkled with nutmeg. Whenever Ole commenced slowing down, someone would hand him another drink. He would swallow it in a hurry, smack his lips, take another pinch of snuff, wipe off his mustache, rub some more rosin on the bow and start playing, keeping time by tramping his right foot up and down. It is a wonder that his violin could survive the rugged treatment he gave it.

Ole enjoyed being among the young folks, playing his violin. Many a night he would play until morning, except for coffee breaks and a few drinks. The drinks were furnished by the host, mixed in the kitchen, and limited to three or four rounds during the night. Although the older men had their drinks, we younger folks were not permitted to indulge in any drinking during the time we were growing up. Those not dancing would visit around the kitchen table, telling stories and sipping toddy. During the coffee intermission, a collection was taken for the violin players.

I recall one time at a dance at the Lars Monge home. John Hendrickson and Ole Hannes were the fiddlers as usual. They both had a few drinks and John was standing up in front of Ole while playing. When Ole noticed it he stood up, raised his violin bow and whacked John on the head saying, "By hookey, you sit down you long-legged devil". John took it good-naturedly and sat down. Toward morning Lars Monge got into a fight with some of the men. (Ole was mixed up in this too) There was a cream separator in one corner of the kitchen with a can of buttermilk on the stand. This was tipped over in the scuffle and the men slipped and fell in the spilled milk. Mrs. Monge grabbed a broom and soon put a stop to the commotion.

One winter evening Ole and his son and daughter, Jenney and Einar, with John Hendrickson stopped at our home on the way to a dance. Clara and I went with them. As it was a very cold evening, we were nearly frozen stiff by the time we had ridden the four miles home again. Ole didn't seem to mind the cold; he was having a good time whistling and singing all the way.

NEW TOWNS

In 1906 the Soo Line Railway completed its branch line from Drake to Bismarck. Town sites were then plotted and new towns were built. This, of course, was of great benefit to the farmers in the surrounding territory. It brought them closer to markets for grain, cattle, and produce. It shortened the time it took to go to town for groceries, coal, and supplies.

One of the first towns to be settled and developed was Dogden, which was nine miles to the northwest of our farm. (The name was later changed to Butte) Two years later the town of Kief was started. Although the distance to Kief was one and one-half miles shorter and the roads were not as rough, we continued to do some of our trading in Dogden. One of the reasons for this was that Mother had butter customers there to whom she delivered a five pound crock of butter each week. Consequently we had made many friends among the English, Scandinavian, and Jewish people there.

Dodgen got its name from the range of hills known as the "Dogden Buttes", the town being located at the base of these hills. The hills had been given this name by Indians who had inhabited them earlier.

Kief, even though misspelled, is the namesake of Kiev, Russia. Before the railroad was built through this territory, there was a country post office named Owens on this site. In 1908, after the railroad was built, it was decided to establish a town. The railroad company asked the residents of the then growing town to name it and in doing so, choose a name with no more than five letters in it. A special meeting was called by some of the local business men. They invited the farmers in the surrounding area to attend. Several names were considered at the time. Some wanted the name of their village or home town in Russia, others wanted the name of the county in which they had lived in the old country, others wanted a family name. Finally it was agreed to choose a name that would apply to most of the people involved. The name "Kief" was decided upon, since nearly all of the people in the area were from the province of Kief in Ukraine, Russia, and therefore the name would be a remembrance to them and their children.

CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE DAY

After the spring seeding in 1908, Dad hauled lumber for a new barn. The old one had become too small for the number of cattle we had acquired. Dad built the barn himself with the exception of the erection of the rafters. Lars Monge helped him with that. The barn was completed by the middle of June.

It was the usual custom to celebrate the Fourth of July at England's Lake or at the home of one of the homesteaders. Since we had a new barn, the neighbors asked to celebrate the Fourth at our farm. The barn was 40 x 24 feet and had a hay loft with a new floor that would be big enough for dancing. This would save the labor and expense of building the usual platform that was otherwise needed. After much discussion by Mother and Dad, it was agreed to have the celebration on our farm if everyone would be careful with matches and smoking around the buildings.

As the preparations were being made, we children could hardly wait for the big day. Mother scrubbed and baked; Dad cut and raked grass around the buildings, erected benches in the hay loft and also a small platform for the fiddlers. Lars Monge helped build an outside stairway and entrance platform with railings, which led into the west entrance of the hay loft.

You can imagine our disappointment when, a few days before the Fourth, we four children came down with measles. Were we to miss all the excitement? On the morning of the Fourth, Clara and Ida were up but Ann and I were still quite sick.

It was a quiet, clear morning with all indications of a hot day. Mother and Dad were up early to get the milking and separating done, calves fed, livestock in the pasture, and everything cleaned up before the neighbors arrived.

Martin Dalos came early, setting up a tent west of the barn in which to sell ice cream, lemonade, oranges, candy, pop corn, fireworks, and small flags. He also raised a large flag on a pole attached to the gable of the barn. By eleven o'clock the farmers and their families began arriving and by noon the yard was full of people who had arrived by wagon, buggy, or on horseback. Besides the neighbors, families came from Dogden and Balfour. It was a much larger crowd than had been expected.

The barrels and kegs of beer, brought out from Dogden, were hauled out to the grove in the coulee south of the farm and unloaded

there. That afternoon and evening there was considerable traffic, by the men, to and from the coulee. All of them seemed quite happy when they returned, some of them singing, "Ja vi elsker dette landet som det stiger from". (The Norwegian national anthem, "Yes, we love this land, etc.) No one was unruly and everything went fine until toward evening when Lars Monge decided he was going to "clean up" on that "big German lumberman from Dogden". Lars was running around scratching, swinging, and calling names. Lars was a cocky little man and, after a few drinks, always ready to fight. They were soon parted by Christ Furness who grabbed Lars by the neck with one hand and set him down.

During the afternoon there were races for the men, women, and children, including sack and horse races. I was out of bed and outside by evening. Mother gave each of us money with which to buy an ice cream cone, an orange, and, for me, a five cent package of firecrackers. Later in the afternoon, the farmers had to go home to do their chores. They returned later for the fireworks and then prepared to stay for the all-night dancing. The people from town brought their lunch, picnicing in the yard. Mother invited the Christ Furness, Lars Monge, Erick Erickson, and Ole Hamness families in for supper.

After dark there were fireworks by the fence south of the barn. They consisted of small and large rockets, Roman candles, and noise makers. Martin Dalos had charge of the fireworks display. After the fireworks, Ole Hamness and John Dalos tuned up their violins and soon the hay loft floor was crowded with dancers, swinging their partners and stamping their heavy shoes on the floor. Sometimes it was almost impossible to hear the music above the noise. Everyone had a good time. The sun was coming up in the east before the last team left the yard.

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IMPROVEMENTS

As the family increased and grew older, the little house we lived in became inadequate. Our family consisted of six children. Beside Clara and myself there were now four little sister. Ida was born June 21, 1906, and a little over a year later, Ann Marie arrived on September 18, 1907. Laura Christine was born March 20, 1909 and the baby of the family, Emma, arrived on July 8, 1911.

Mother and Dad, not wanting to go into debt by borrowing from the bank to build a new house, saved a little each year for this purpose. In the spring of 1912, by selling a few head of cattle, they had enough money to buy the lumber and hire a carpenter to build a house suited to our needs. Dad bought the lumber in Kief and hauled it out to the farm with team and wagon.

The new house was completed and we moved into it before harvest time. It was a big improvement over the small home-
stead shack. This new home had a kitchen, pantry, living room, and one bedroom downstairs, plus two bedrooms and two large storage rooms upstairs. It was heated with a hard coal heater in the living room. For our bath we still had to use a galvanized tub and there was the usual outdoor toilet with the Sears Roebuck catalog. 35

The old house was now used for a storage and coal shed. Some time prior to this we built a granary, later adding to it a lean-to for use as a buggy shed when Dad brought home a shiny new double seated buggy.

Sheds were built on both sides of the barn, giving us adequate room for the livestock. Water had been a problem for us ever since moving to the farm, having to water the stock and carry the drinking water from the Wehr farm. Wells were dug by hand and at one time we hired a man to bore a hole with a machine but we were unable to locate water of sufficient quantity for our use. After all this had failed we hired a well driller to drill a well. He struck an adequate supply of water after drilling one hundred ten feet. We then set up a windmill which solved our water problem and was a wonderful improvement to the farm. 35
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BUTCHERING ON THE FARM

The butchering was done in the fall after the ground had frozen and we were sure the weather would stay cold so the meat would keep from spoiling. This was done by the family, usually with the help of one or two of the neighbors. Sometimes Ole Hammes, Pete Peister, or Pete Preisinger and his wife would be there to help us. When they were ready to do their butchering, we would help them in return. Dad did all the killing because he had worked at the butchering trade before he started farming and was skilled in using the knife. The butchering was usually done out by the granary on the side away from the wind. The wagon box was turned upside down in order to lean a barrel against it and to serve as a platform to stand on while dunking the pig up and down in the barrel until the bristles softened.

It was a day of excitement! We had to get a hot fire going in the stove in order to get the water in the wash boiler boiling hot. That meant getting up early to carry in the coal. When the water was about ready to boil, the men went to the pigpen where we all helped to get the pig cornered so Dad could get hold of him. The pig would squeal and, of course, we youngsters got excited. We would then be told to "get out of the way". One of the men would hold the hind legs while one of the others would hit the pig in the center of the forehead with a heavy hammer. This stunned the pig and it would go limp. Dad then could stick it in the throat with the knife. One of us children would bring along a pan to catch the blood. We would then have to keep stirring it so it would not clot. Mother would put a pinch of salt in the pan before sending it out. She would make two different kinds of blood cake from the blood.

After killing the pig, it was dragged to the wagon box and hoisted into the barrel, head first, ready for scalding. The men carried the boiler of hot water from the house and poured it over the pig and into the barrel. They had to use enough scalding water so it would be up high enough in the barrel so as to be able to dunk the pig up and down in the water. The pig was dunked head down and then turned upside down and dunked some more. After a while it was pulled part way out of the barrel to check the bristles. When the men thought they were soft enough, the pig was pulled out of the barrel and laid on the wagon box bottom, which served as the platform, so everyone could get around to help scrape off the bristles. We used knives and scrapers, with some working on the head and feet, always the hardest to clean, and others working on the body.

After the scraping was completed and a heavy hardwood stick placed between the hind legs to spread them apart, the pig was raised

up by the hind legs and tied to a tripod made of heavy poles. It was then necessary to cut the pig open from tail to head and clean out the insides. It was then left hanging to cool while the men went into the house where Mother had prepared a delicious supper for them. After they had finished eating, smoked their pipes and visited, they carried the pig into the granary, laying it on some slabs to cool until morning. This ended the butchering for the day.

The following morning the oil cloth was removed from the kitchen table, (this was the only table we had) and the pig carried in from the granary and laid on it. Dad would then cut it into chops, pork steak, roast, ham, and sausage meat. When I was small I used to hide under the bed while this was going on.

After the pig was cut up, most of the meat was placed in a barrel in the cellar and this was then filled with salt brine to cure the meat and keep it from spoiling. The meat, ground up for sausage, was packed into cake pans. This Mother would place in the shanty so it would freeze.

Later in the fall we would slaughter a two-year-old steer. This animal could usually be led to the place where we had poles set up and did the butchering. If we had a "22" rifle on hand, it was easier to shoot the animal in the head rather than hit it on the head with a hammer to stun it. After it was killed, we would hoist it up on the poles and do the skinning. This meat would be cut up into quarters and hung in the granary to be used as needed during the winter months. Some of it was cut up to be ground and mixed with the ground pork to be used as "sausage meat".

In making the sausage, we children were more than willing workers. We would help cut the meat into small pieces to be fed into the meat grinder, turn the grinder, and after the meat was ground, stuff the casing with the ground meat. Mother used to make the casings for the sausage by cleaning and scraping the intestines of the pig. We would place the intestines in a wash tub and carry this into the shanty. There, Mother would do the cleaning and scraping. Believe me, none of us children came close to this place of operation because of the offensive odor. The only one staying close by was old Snep, the dog. He would sit patiently, waiting outside the door, in hopes there would be something left for him.

Mother used to make blood bologna, prepare the tongue, make head cheese, and render lard. From the beef she would make Rulle Polse and Speke Sjot. These, as far as I know, are Scandinavian preparations. The Rulle Polse being made of the lean strips of beef which are spiced and rolled into a thick sausage. The Speke Sjot was pieces of beef cured and hung up to dry.

With all this meat, we felt we could survive through another winter. It took a lot of work to butcher and prepare the meat but everyone in the family took part in the work. We did not have a turkey for Thanksgiving or for Christmas but we did have a good pork roast, one of the pleasures of living on the farm.

FARMING

In the beginning we got along with only two horses, borrowing from Jack Wehr, our closest neighbor, whenever an extra horse was needed for plowing or harvesting. More land had been broken and a sulky plow acquired. (The sulky plow was a riding plow, drawn by three horses and turning only one furrow) We now bought Beauty, a well-built dappled gray mare from Emry Olsen. The Olsen's, Emry, Edgar, and their Dad, A. P., moved from Minnesota after filing on land four miles south of us. They brought several very fine horses with them to sell. With the new plow and extra horse, we could now farm on a larger scale. We continued to clear the land, digging and hauling rocks, until there were large rock piles at the end of each field. We would then break the land and seed it into flax for the first crop.

We next bought Jim, a bay stallion, from Sam Sepchenko. We also purchased a new Rock Island gang plow. (A gang plow turned two furrows. It had three wheels, one ran in the open furrow ahead of the first plow, another in the furrow back of the last plow, and the third on the unplowed land) It was usually drawn by five horses but since we had but four, that is all we used. It was necessary to give the horses a rest at the end of each round. I walked behind the plow in order to lighten the load.

After a few years our two mares, Fly and Beauty, produced three colts, Norman, Zelom, and Nancy. All of them became good work horses. We then used five or six horses on the gang plow, with a tandem hitch. Prince and Fly in the lead. We would usually plow a forty-acre field. This would take about eight days. (Plowing five acres a day was considered a good day's work) After the plowing, a harrow would be dragged across the field to pulverize and smooth the soil. The field then was seeded into wheat or other grain with a four horse drill.

In late summer, after the grain ripened, the crop was harvested. (It was cut with a binder, then shocked and threshed) Harvesting was hard work. The days were usually very hot and it was necessary to work from early morning until late at night in order to get the crop cut down before it started shelling or was destroyed by wind or hail. We had a seven foot cut Deering binder drawn by four horses. We could cut from fifteen to twenty acres a day, depending on the terrain of the land and the crop. This was a self-binder. A canvas belt carried the grain to the binder head where it was packed until there was enough grain for a bundle. A trap would then set the knotting machinery in motion and the bundle would be firmly bound with twine. It was then moved from the binder head by revolving arms, and loaded

upon a platform. The grain was dumped from this platform onto the field, leaving the bundles in rows later to be put up into shocks. The shocking was done by setting the bundles, head up, in small piles resembling an Indian tepee. This was done so the grain would shed water and keep from spoiling until it was threshed.

On hot days the horses would be wet with sweat, white foam forming under the harness. By evening they were dead tired from pulling the load, the heat, and the large horse flies which annoyed them. Even though we had nose baskets to protect them, the flies would swarm around, trying to get at their noses or lay eggs on their front legs. When stopping to oil the machinery, the horses would stamp their feet and continuously toss their heads and switch their tails, trying to get rid of the pests. I recall one evening, about quitting time, when I was cutting oats in a field on a side hile east of the house. While I was in the process of adjusting the reel, the bull wheel struck a rock, bouncing the binder in the air. I was thrown down onto the platform. The horses became frightened, but being close to home and tired, the moment I screamed "Whoa" they stopped, saving me from being battered around on the platform or cut by the sickle.

TRIPS TO TOWN

Dad would make a trip to town on the average of once a week. He usually went on Saturday, bringing in eggs to be traded at the store, and cans of cream, to be shipped to the creameries in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He would then pick up the empty cream cans that had been returned from the previous week's shipment at the depot.

Dad would start for town in the morning after the chores had been done. He would have hay and oats along for the horses as the trip would take all day. He always stopped to visit with neighbors living close to the road or an acquaintance driving in the opposite direction. The first stop would be with our neighbor George Peister, who on seeing Dad, would be sure to be out by the road by the time he got there. George would want a package of True Smoke or an empty cream can brought back from town. That stop would be good for at least thirty minutes or until Dad would have to get going to make the 11:30 "dinky" running between Drake and Bismarck.

After Dad unloaded the cream cans at the depot, he would unhitch the team in back of the general store and tie them to the back of the buggy so they could feed on the hay and oats. The empty kerosene can and pail of eggs were brought into the store and the list for groceries was handed to the storekeeper. While waiting for the clerk to count the eggs, the farmers would chip in and buy a piece of summer sausage, crackers, and cheese for their lunch. They would all sit around the pot bellied coal stove, telling stories and discussing grain prices. On the way home there would be another visit to deliver the True Smoke or cream cans, arriving home about supper time. We children waited for a piece of candy from the bag the storekeeper had put into the grocery box.

In the late fall and winter Dad would haul the wheat to the elevator in Kief, loading the evening before and starting early the next morning, sometimes before sunrise. No matter how early he started, he almost always got home after dark. It was a hard and tiresome job, especially when the snow was deep and the roads drifted. He would often have to get off and walk beside the sleigh to keep warm. He always wore his sheepskin lined coat, buffalo hide mittens, felt lined shoes, four buckle overshoes, and fur cap pulled down over his ears. Even with all this clothing it was impossible to keep warm on those long slow trips.

We were fortunate in that we did not have to go to town to pick up the mail. In 1911 our post office was changed from Dogden to Byersville. This was a country office located at the Pete Preisinger residence. This was less than two miles from our farm. It was supplied by mail messenger service from Dogden. Ole Hammes made the trip three times a week. Later rural route service was established from the Kief post office and our mail box was located but one half mile from our house,

CHURCH AND LADIES AID

The early Scandinavian settlers were sincere in their Christian faith. They organized a Lutheran Church before they established the first school. The first order of business was to assess each member ten dollars a year toward the preacher's salary. That was a lot of money for most of the members in those days, for the homesteader had a lot more faith than he had cash.

The church services were conducted in the school houses, with services every third or fourth Sunday at each congregation. Oliver L. Fladager was sent by the home mission to serve as pastor for our Churchill Congregation; also the East and West Scandian Congregations which were to the south of ours. He was a single man recently ordained into the ministry. Not long after arriving he filed on a homestead and with the help of some of the members, hauled lumber and built a shack and barn, covering them with tar paper. He was soon regarded as one of the pioneer bachelor homesteaders.

He traveled with horse and buggy in summer and sleigh in winter. With this slow mode of travel it was impossible for the pastor to spend much time at each home. Besides the regular services he had confirmation classes and he always attended the Ladies Aid meetings. The first confirmation class was started in the spring of 1911. We met with the pastor at the Byersville school house during the summer, and resumed the following spring, with confirmation set for Sunday, June 2.

This same spring the homesteaders in the neighborhood, including all the members of the congregation, were invited to attend the wedding of Valborg Bjorhus and Helmer Dalos at the farm home of her parents. After the ceremony was over and dinner served, the floor in the living room was cleared for dancing.

The rules of the church forbade dancing, drinking, and card playing. Pastor Fladager was very strict about these matters. Mr. Bjorhus, the host, informed the pastor that there was going to be dancing in the living room and those not wishing to dance were welcome to visit in the dining room and kitchen. Those of us that were confirmands kept an eye on the preacher to be sure he had gone before we dared to get on the dance floor. He must have been suspicious because at the class the following Saturday he asked us, calling each by name to answer "Yes", or "No", if we had danced at the wedding. We all answered "Yes", except for one "No". He then

proceeded to give us a lecture on the sins of dancing, with the warning that if he heard of us doing it again he was going to postpone the confirmation.

Rev. Fladager was a very serious person, seldom laughing or smiling. However one time Elvina Erickson, sitting in a seat in the back of the room with her little brother Axel sitting directly in back of her, commenced giggling. The preacher got up from his chair wanting to know the reason why. She said, "Han Axel ha putta gom i haare met". (Axel has put gum in my hair) That started all of us snickering and Fladager turned around with a broad grin on his face.

On the day of confirmation, the confirmands all walked to church. This was an old Norwegian custom and requested by the parents and pastor. It was a lovely morning so we stopped along the way to pick a few crocuses on the hillside. There were six of us; Agnes and Carl Bjorhus, Elvina Erickson, Jennie Hammes, Clara, and myself. We were confirmed in the Norwegian language. I recall how grown up we felt when the church members congratulated us after the services.

The best part of our community life was centered in the church. The Ladies Aid promoted sociability and raised money to help pay the pastor's salary. The Aid would meet once a month at the different homes. As the members came from miles around, the men came along to do the driving and enjoy the opportunity for visiting. The pastor would be there to conduct a short devotional service. After this a sumptuous lunch would be served by the hostess. There would be potato salad, fruit salad, sandwiches, pie, cake, cookies, and coffee. In those days no one was diet conscious so nearly everyone would be back for two or three helpings. A free will offering would then be taken.

After lunch the men would play horse shoe or exchange ideas about farming and politics. The ladies busied themselves with sewing and crocheting for their annual auction sale of fancy work.

It was customary at that time to have periodic questioning of the congregation by the district Bishop. One Sunday Pastor Fladager announced that at the next meeting, Pastor Malen from Harvey would conduct "Vise tas" as it was called in Norwegian. At our next service Pastor Malen was there as announced and after the service, commenced the questioning. Everything went along fine until the following question was asked, "Er der nogen dranker i menigheden?" (Are there any drunkards in the congregation?) The church became as quiet as the dead of night. He repeated the question and still no one answered. The reason being, of course, that there weren't any of the older men who would refuse a drink or two of beer or whiskey. He repeated the question the third time in a loud clear voice, "Er der nogen dranker i menigheden?" After a short pause there was a stir in a corner of the room and

heads turned to see Lars Monge getting to his feet. He addressed the Pastor as follows: "Min gode mand, Erlige Predikant, der er ikke nogen dranker i denne menighed, like ledes er der ikke nogen av mandene some ikke tager an dram eller to." (My good man, honorable Pastor, there are no drunkards in this congregation, also there is not a man that will not take a drink or two) There was a sigh of relief from the men. Monge was a hero!! He had come to the rescue at a crucial moment. No doubt he received several free drinks the next time the men congregated at one of the "blind pigs" at Dogden.

All church services were conducted in the Norwegian language. Dad was the "klokke". He lead the singing and read part of the liturgy. As compensation for this service an offering was included for him at the regular services. He would receive approximately three dollars at each offering.

Jens Erickson, one of the two sons of Mr. and Mrs. Erick Erickson, contacted tuberculosis. In those years this disease was considered incurable. To the sorrow of the congregation, Jens passed away the following spring and was the first and, I believe, the only one buried in the two acre tract donated to the church as cemetery by the Erickson family. At the time of his death, Rev. Fladager was gone so no Pastor was available to conduct the funeral service. The funeral was held with some of the men of the congregation conducting the service by reading appropriate passages from the Bible. However, there was a rule of the church that the part of the service in which a shovel of soil is placed on the coffin at the reading of Genesis 3:19, "For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return", must be conducted by an ordained minister. A triangular trough made of 1" x 4" lumber was made and extended from the top of the grave down to the coffin. This left an opening through the center for the minister to pour the soil when he returned.

Some of the neighbors not belonging to the congregation, looked with disfavor on this and reported it to the authorities at Washburn, the county seat. They claimed that germs of tuberculosis, being a highly contagious disease, could be spread through this opening. The county authorities did request that the trough be extracted or filled with soil. By the time the request was made, the minister was due to return so nothing was done until he arrived. He then completed the funeral service in accordance with church rules.

In the month of June the congregations in the circuit would have an annual picnic at England's Lake. Reverend Malen drove the forty miles from Harvey with horse and buggy to deliver the message. There would also be a short program of songs and recitations by the children. The ladies would bring a pot luck lunch.

In the fall of the year there was the annual Ladies Aid fancy work sale at the school house. There were pillow cases, aprons of all descriptions, crocheted doilies, knitted mittens and socks, patch work quilts and numerous other articles. Dad was usually called on to be the auctioneer. For his services he received coffee and cake. This sale would always enrich the treasury of the Aid by one hundred dollars or more.

Rev. Fladager continued to serve the Churchill Congregation until it was discontinued. Many of the Norwegian settlers moved away while others joined the St. Pauls Lutheran Church at Dogden. He did continue to live on his homestead, in his tar paper shack, serving the East and West Scandia (Skogmo) congregations until his death in the late twenties. He never married.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas eve is considered to be family night by the Norwegians. This is a tradition brought over from Norway to the United States. Christmas day is celebrated in church with programs for the children and services for the grown-ups. The Christmas season was looked forward to with much excitement, especially by the children. Preparations and plans were made weeks ahead.

During the first years on the farm, the only Christmas tree was at the school program, usually purchased a day or two preceding Christmas eve. The money for buying a tree, treats, and gifts was raised by having a basket social at the school, usually some time in November. The school house was always packed at the basket socials by families whose children attended school and by bachelor homesteaders. The bachelors came from miles around to bid on the teacher's or their favorite girl friend's basket and then take part in the dance which always followed.

I can remember very well the first Christmas program I took part in. The evergreens had to be shipped in from northern Minnesota and were hard to get. Walter Bjorhus and Christ Furness were to get the tree. By the time they got to town the large ones were gone and only a few small trees were left. They decided the trees were too small so they drove out to a coulee and chopped down a six-foot choke cherry tree and brought it to the school house. The next day we wrapped the trunk and branches with green crepe paper. Although it wasn't as elegant as some we had later, I'm sure no tree was ever more admired or appreciated than that one.

The only trimmings we had were made by us children: strings of pop corn, cranberries, colored paper chains, and lanterns. Colored wax candles completed the decorations. Under the tree were stacked the gifts for all the children in the neighborhood. The program consisted of recitations, dialogues, and carols by the children. When it was over the teacher, with one or two helpers, proceeded to light the candles on the tree. One of the helpers stood guard until the candles burned down in order to put out any fire that might start from the flame of the candles among the branches. After the candles had been lighted, Santa arrived carrying a full sack of bags of candy and nuts. Walter Bjorhus was the Santa. He crawled into the school through a window back of the tree. He would walk among us children with the sack on his back, finally drop the sack on the floor and look around without saying a word. Finally Miss Blakesle, the teacher, told him to say something to the children. He answered, "What should I say?" "Shake hands with them," she said. He eventually got over his stage fright so was able to say a few words to we children and give us some candy and nuts. After

this the evening's festivities ended. All of us went home feeling that the Christmas program had been one of the most enjoyable experiences of the year.

During the first years on the farm we didn't receive many toys. Mother made dolls and sewed dresses for the girls and shirts for Dad and me. It was a lot of work to make gifts for everyone, bake lefse, fattigman, kranzer, and kringla, and the many other Norwegian baked goods of plain and fancy varieties.

In later years we had a Christmas tree at home and trimmed it. After a delicious dinner of lefse and lutefisk, all of us returned to the living room, where the few gifts lay under the tree. Mother and the older girls would do the dinner dishes and put away the food while the smaller girls would wait impatiently for Santa Claus to arrive. During this waiting period they would sing Christmas carols and give the recitations they had learned for the school program. Soon we would hear bells and heavy foot steps. Santa would arrive carrying a sack on his back and stamping the snow from his four buckle overshoes. Sister Emma would get frightened and start to cry but would soon forget about it when Santa put his bag on the floor and asked, "Have you been good little girls?" They, of course, shouted, "Yes". After the gifts under the tree and those in Santa's pack were distributed, Santa would finally leave, shaking hands with everyone and promising to return the next year. Shortly after he left one of the men, who had been absent, would come in and say how very sorry he was that Santa had come and gone while he was out getting a pail of coal for the fire. We would then proceed to open our gifts.

The girls would receive dolls and doll buggies, slates, other school supplies, besides some article of home made clothing. I would receive a sled, jack knife, a game plus socks, mittens, or a home made shirt. Mother would get pillow cases, aprons, or some article for the kitchen. Dad would receive socks, mittens, or a shirt. All of us were always pleased with our gifts.

After everyone had admired all of the gifts we would gather up the empty boxes and paper. The rest of the evening would be spent admiring and playing with our gifts. While we were doing this we were also busy eating candy and nuts from the bags Santa had left. We would all have a cup of coffee and cookies or fattigman before going to bed, thankful for the blessings of another Christmas.

COUNTRY SCHOOL

At the time we moved on our homestead there was no public school. Mother taught us Norwegian, reading and writing from books she had brought from Norway. We enjoyed using the Norwegian language and continued to use it in our home for many years. In 1907, John Dalos and Lars Monge were hired by McLean County District No. 46 to build Byersville school No. 4, located three miles southwest of our home.

The road was long and hilly but we managed to attend school almost every day during the seven month term. In winter, when the snow was deep, we would have to start before daylight, walking the mile and one-half to the Pete Preisinger farm. There we would warm up while we waited for them to get ready to take their two children, Ella and Bennie, to school. They had a bob sled and had plenty of room for us. In the evening we would again ride with them to their farm and then walk the rest of the way home.

Effie Blakeslie was our first teacher. The twenty-one pupils were Valborg, Arthur, August, Carl, Agnes, Elvina, and Annie Bjorhus; Ethel Dye; Alvina and Axel Erickson; Ella and Bennie Preisinger; Jennie and Einar Hamnes; Nick, John, Lova, and Stacia Fedorenko; Olga Frieman; my sister, Clara, and myself. Officers of the school board were J. S. Armstrong, President, Walter Bjorhus, Clerk, William Busse, Treasurer, Robert Hedges and Mr. Bowers, Directors.

By the time school facilities were provided, many of the pupils were quite advanced in age for beginners. The average student was ten to fourteen years of age. Four of the boys were close to or over twenty. Although we were of the age when young people often resort to mischief, our school was quiet and orderly. The older pupils studied very hard to get as far advanced as possible in the limited time left for schooling. Many of them, besides the regular reading, writing, and arithmetic, were trying to master the English language.

We always looked forward to recess and the lunch hour. During the winter months we played outside, sliding down the hills on our homemade sleds and skis. In the spring, after the weather had warmed sufficiently to melt the snow and make ponds which would again freeze solid, we would skate on the ponds close to the school house. Some of the older boys were expert skaters. Later in the spring there was what we called "rubber ice". Ice just thick enough to hold our weight if we skated quickly from one shore to the other.

Sometimes we became a little too brave and so we returned to the school house wet and cold. To the teacher's question, "What in the world happened?" the usual reply was, "Oh, nothing". This would usually happen in the morning before school started. We would then be restricted to the school grounds for the remainder of the day. The soaked one would have to sit close to the stove to keep warm and to dry his clothes. After the snow and ice melted, we played games on the school grounds; tag, prisoners base, duck on the rock and anti-over.

We continued going to the Byersville school for three years. A new school was then built in Strassburg Township, one and one-half miles east of our farm. This school was closer and in our own district so we enrolled there that fall. At first we were lonesome for our old friends at the Byersville school but soon made new ones. We would walk to this school most of the time. After my younger sisters started, Dad would take us to school in the sleigh if the weather was cold or stormy.

As soon as there was a good sleigh road, I would drive to the school house. After the girls jumped out I would then turn the team around and start them on the return trip, tie the lines to the double box and jump out. The team would follow the trail back home. Dad would be waiting to unhitch and lead them back into the barn. The school district finally built a barn by the school house for us to keep our horses in. Then we would drive to school and keep our horses in the school barn until it was time to return home.

In this school we met a different nationality of people. The children were from German or Russian families. Some of them brought lunches consisting of salt pork and hunks of bread with syrup instead of butter. Onions and garlic were on the menu of many of the lunches. Often the teacher had to open the windows and door to rid the school of garlic fumes. Here, the girls usually played indoors, while we boys played baseball. In the spring of the year the prairie around the school house was literally alive with gophers. We would drown them out by carrying buckets of water from the ponds and pour the water into the gopher hole. One of the Samashuk boys would stand beside the hole and grab the gopher as he came rushing out.

In those days too, the school board members were composed of local men in the district, many of whom were foreign born with little, if any, education. I recall one member, an old gentleman of German birth. He visited school one day when a class was studying spelling. A little boy had difficulty spelling the word "stove", "S-t-o" said the lad. The visiting member immediately volunteered his help, telling the lad to say "f" which, in the German pronunciation, would have been correct. The poor embarrassed teacher had to come to the assistance of both.

After all of my sisters were old enough to attend school, there was always four or five lunches to pack. They consisted of

cold meat or jelly sandwiches, with homemade bread and butter, an apple, and cookies or cake. We always had an extra sandwich to eat on the way home or to give to our dog who would always come to meet us.

During the winter our rig for going to school was a bob sled and a double box with straw on the floor to help keep our feet warm. The girls would sit on spring seats put long ways on the floor of the box. Many times the temperature got down to twenty or thirty below zero with drifting snow. Although heavily dressed with overshoes, wool mittens, and scarfs covering our faces, we would be shivering with cold when we arrived at the school house. We would rush in and after hanging up our wraps, stand around the coal stove to get warm. We usually ended up by roasting behind and shivering in front or visa versa. The teacher or bigger boys carried in buckets of lignite coal, filling the heater and opening the drafts until the stove became red hot, blistering the boards on the wall behind it.

As I grew older I had to stay home to work in the fields a good deal of the time during the spring and fall. The girls continued their education through high school and the state teachers college at Minot, North Dakota.

HERDING CATTLE

After a few years the number of cattle increased from the seven milk cows and the few calves we brought from Ft. Ransom to a herd of about fifty head. This included from twelve to eighteen milking cows. The few acres fenced for pasture on the south forty was rocky and hilly and did not grow enough grass to graze that many cattle. Therefore, during the summer months from June 1 until after the threshing was completed, it was necessary to herd the cattle in the hills south and east from our farm. The herding was done on rented or unsettled land. My job was to keep the cattle out of the sloughs and hay land until after the hay had been cut, stacked, and fenced, or hauled away. The requirement was for each settler to have at least five acres broke on each quarter-section homestead. This would be a strip or two between the hills and usually it was seeded into grain. These small fields caused by far the most trouble to the herder. When the stock came close to a field and could smell the grain, one or two of the greedy cows would start for it with the others following. The dog was then sent to fetch them back. This he was more than willing to do, often chasing them farther than necessary.

Up to the time I was old enough to do general farm work such as helping with the haying, harvesting, and threshing, it was my duty to take care of the cattle during the day. After the morning milking was finished, I would chase the cattle to the opposite end of the fence, out through the gate, to the grazing land. We did not have any extra horses to use for riding so I had to follow them on foot. The days were usually hot, dry, and windy. There were no trees for shade and no fresh water to drink. Most of the time was spent sitting on a hill by some rocks, the dog lying close by with his head between his front paws, tongue out, panting from the heat. When the cattle started to stray or were getting close to forbidden territory, we would run to bring them back. Toward noon I would head them toward home, keeping an eye on our house. Close to meal time Mother, Dad or one of the girls would come out and wave a towel as a signal to start for home.

Before we had a well drilled, the stock had to be watered at the Wehr farm so the stock would go directly past our farm to the water tank before we could have dinner. After dinner and an hours rest in the shade, it would be back again to the hills with the stock. During the first part of June I would spend some of my time snaring gophers. The dog would be close by ready to pounce on it the minute I pulled the string. The county paid a bounty of three cents per tail early in the season. I would trap or snare about 300 of them by the end of June.

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There were several groves of choke cherry and June berry trees in the coulees and along some of the sloughs. During the latter part of June, when the berries ripened, I would take two half-gallon syrup pails with me and bring them home full of berries every day, noon and evening, as long as there were any to pick. Then the choke cherries would be ripe and I would do the same with them, bringing home two or three pails every day. Mother would can June berries for pie and sauce and make choke cherry jelly to last us through the year.

After I got older and we had a horse to spare, Dad let me use Prince as a riding pony. I used some of the money I had saved from the gopher tail bounty and ordered a five dollar saddle from Montgomery Ward. Einer Hamnes and Bennie Preisinger, neighbor boys about my age, were herding their stock about 1 1/2 miles south of us. All of us now had saddle ponies and so able to travel further. We would drive the three herds into one large herd, making a total of 130 head. We took our lunch along and so were able to stay together all day until it was time to start feeding the herd toward home. We took turns on our ponies chasing the strays and keeping them away from the grain fields and hay land. At noon and in the evening we would drive them to water in the nearby sloughs.

One of the families always rented a quarter of land to herd on but we were never too particular about confining them within these limits. We built a stone house on one of the highest hills. This was our lookout. Whenever someone was seen coming our way, one or two of us would mount our horses and drive the herd back to the rented quarter. If there were questions asked, we never knew whose stock had grazed on any of the adjoining land. We had our quarter rented and that is where we kept our herd!

When Ida and Ann became old enough, it became their summer job to herd the cattle. Out in the morning, home at noon, out again at 1:00; sitting in the hot sun all afternoon until it was time for the evening milking. One summer after Shep died, they were without a dog. The cattle got so they were unwilling to move unless the girls would run after them with a whip. If they got a notion to start for a grain field, away they would go and there was no stopping them until they had reached their goal. Although the girls had whips made with a leather leash on one end, the cattle would not budge until they had been lashed across the legs. Finally, after considerable chasing and running, they would be driven out of the field. In the evening the cattle would start for home, forming a line behind the lead cow. This cow was always one of the older cows in the herd. She had a heavy bill strapped around her neck and was always the first to start for home.

After Ida and Ann started confirmation classes, they carried their Catechism and Bible history books with them. From these they committed to memory the assignments for each week. This was difficult for them as they had to learn these assignments in the Norwegian language.

After supper Mother, Dad, and the girls would do the milking. As the pails were filled they would be set on the outside of the fence until Dad finished the cow he was milking. Sometimes the cat would sneak up for a drink of fresh milk before Dad got around to carrying it into the house. Dad, seeing the cat, would exclaim as he ran to chase her away, "Der er den forbanna kata i melka igen". (There is that damn cat in the milk again) At times the mosquitoes were so thick that we built a smudge fire to keep them away. The older cows would walk into the heavy smoke to get rid of the pests.

After the cows were milked, the milk was carried into the storm shanty to be separated. Dad would turn the hand-operated De Laval cream separator while Mother poured the whole milk into the supply tank and changed the full pails for empty ones as the milk was separated. After this job was finished, pails of the separated milk was carried into the barn for the calves. A measured amount of milk was fed to each calf. They were always hungry and never seemed to get enough. The larger calves always tried to push the smaller ones away.

About half way up the Belapolsky Coulee were approximately two acres of spongy swamp land. At the base of the steep hill bordering the swamp was an open well about four feet deep, curbed with lumber. The curbing extended only a foot or so above the ground. The cows, when grazing in the swamp, would wade over to the well, drink their fill, and then resume feeding. Once, one of our larger milk cows, after drinking, slid into the well back feet first. She was unable to move and only her head, neck, and front feet were above the water line. A team of horses with eveners and a stout rope was brought and the rope tied around the cow's shoulders. Due to soggy footing the team was unable to budge her. Ole Hamnes was plowing on a piece of land west of the coulee. We told him about our predicament so he brought a team, eveners, and a chain which were hitched ahead of our team. By then the cow had sunk so deep that the four horses were unable to move her. We then got shovels to dig a ditch in the slush and mud. We knocked out the curbing and dug a clearance to drag her out. After several attempts, the four horses finally dragged her to the surface and to solid ground. After resting a while, the cow got up and resumed grazing as though nothing had happened. The men and horses were covered with mud.

One of our cows was missing for three days. We looked everywhere for her, riding around to neighboring herds but the cow had simply vanished. On the afternoon of the third day the cow came walking along the cow path. Later we were told that Samachuk and his two boys had pulled her out of a ten foot well with a team of horses. The well was being dug near one of the homestead shacks. Luckily there was no water in it.

THRESHING

At first, Mother and Dad used to stack the grain. They would haul the loads of bundles up close to the farm buildings so when the grain was threshed, the straw would be handy for the stock to feed in during the winter. Mother would do the stacking and Dad would pitch the bundles to her from the hay rack.

It was always difficult to get someone to do the threshing. The rigs would all pull north where the land was level and the farms were larger, coming back late in the fall to thresh the smaller farms. One year there was a heavy crop so it took longer than usual for them to finish threshing on the flat. They were also help up by rainy weather so the little grain we did have was nearly ruined before we were able to get it hauled into stacks. It was getting late in November and our stacks were still standing. Dad came home from Dogden one evening with the good news that John Frantsvog would be out with his threshing rig soon. He had a few jobs of stack threshing southwest of us and would stop at our farm on the way out. Before he came it turned cold and we had four or five inches of drifting snow.

I remember how excited we were when we saw the smoke of the engine and then the machine coming over the hills toward our farm. The waterman and some of the crew came first, all shivering from the cold. Mother gave them coffee and they warmed themselves around the stove until the rig arrived. By the time snow was shoveled from between the grain stacks and the machine set, it was almost sundown. They did thresh some oats that evening so we could feed the horses.

We didn't have room in the house for all the men so some of them had to sleep in the barn. That night it was quite cold. The barn wasn't too warm so the men sleeping out there came in for breakfast half frozen. I can still hear the engineer cussing about being out threshing that late in the year and having to sleep in a barn. When the waterman tried to pump water into the boiler the pump was frozen and had to be thawed out. The fireman had stayed up part of the night and kept the fire going to keep the pipes in the engine from freezing. It was late that morning before they started threshing. The rig ran all day without any stops. They finished threshing on our farm the next morning. It was Thanksgiving Day.

One year Dad had Pete Shaffer thresh our crop. After pulling the rig on the field the engineer and Alex Bonenko, the separator man, argued as to where to set it. Alex wanted it on the east forty but the engineer refused to move the rig that far. He wanted it on the eighty closer to the buildings where Dad also suggested he would like to have the straw pile. Finally Alex, saying he was going to talk to the boss, jumped into his single horse buggy and drove away. The engineer proceeded to set the machine and get ready for threshing. When he came to put the blower belt on, it was missing. Alex had taken it along with him thus preventing them from threshing until he returned. Early next morning Alex returned and, without saying a word, put on the belt, oiled the machine, and gave the signal to start.

Louis Monge threshed for us in 1912. That was my first year at bundle hauling. The work was hard and the hours long. We had to sleep outside by the hay stacks. I was fourteen and there were other boys my age on the crew. In spite of the hard work we enjoyed it. From that year on we were always anxious for fall and "threshing time" to arrive so we could go bundle hauling.

A couple of years later, eight of the neighbors formed a partnership and purchased a second-hand rig. An eighteen horse power Case steamer and a forty inch Minneapolis separator. It didn't take long for us, after we started threshing, to realize that a second hand threshing rig could cause a lot of trouble. There were frequent stops due to the separator and blower becoming plugged, hot boxes, belts breaking, chains disconnecting, or the grain hopper not working properly.

John Lindblom, the separator man, wanted a helper to assist him. Lawrence Holten was hired as his oiler and assistant. Lawrence would walk around the machine, oil can in hand and the grease box in the other, his clothes covered with oil and grease. The machine, in spite of dripping oil and grease, continued to give us trouble. Lawrence spoke broken English and mixed it with Norwegian. When the machine would plug, he would shout to the engineer, "Whoa". After the machine stopped, we would help him open up and clean the plugged cylinder. He in turn gave us the dickens for plugging it by pitching bundles too fast. "Yee vist, its no vunder dey didn' vont to run". After we had it cleaned and ready to start, he would shout, "Gu had". About the time we had started he would notice the blower was also plugged so again it was "Whoa, Vat in hell? Boys help open him op. Ja, de thuble is der is not nuf pover." We, of course, had plugged the machine in order to get some additional rest. When ready to start again, it was the usual, "Gu had". The rig got to be know as the "Whoa and Gu had" Outfit.

One fall, after finishing with the company threshing, we moved fourteen miles into the hills for several jobs of stack threshing. We stayed there over two weeks, almost freezing to death, sleeping by hay stacks or in cow sheds at night.

Bill Kostenko threshed for us the last years we lived on the farm. He had a big clumsy Mogul tractor with a big fly wheel on each side. Starting it on cold mornings was a big problem and turning the enormous crank shaft by hand was almost impossible. To overcome this problem Nazzar, the engineer, would wind a long rope around the fly wheel of the Mogul and fasten the other end of the rope to an evener to which was hitched a team of horses. After taking up the slack in the rope and at a signal from Nazzar, Kostenko would whip the horses, driving them ahead. This would unwind the rope, turning the fly wheel faster and faster. Nazzar would be pouring gasoline into the priming cups, mounted on the two cylinder heads. Finally the monster would suddenly come to life, whirling the fly wheel and making enough noise and smoke to make the devil sit up and take notice.

During these years the threshing crew consisted of an engineer, fireman, separator man and water man plus eight to fourteen bundle haulers and one or two spike pitchers, depending on the size of the machine. The farmer hauled the grain to the granary with the help of one or two of the neighbors.

The early threshing machine was made of wood and mounted on wheels so it could be moved from place to place. The bundles of grain were thrown onto a platform, known as the feeder, and carried into revolving cylinders by a canvas belt with cross bars of wooden slats fastened to a steel chain. After the grain was separated from the straw by the separator, the clean grain was dropped into an elevator that led to a weighing machine at the top of the threshing machine. The hopper had a capacity of one-half bushel and when full, dumped the grain into a spout leading to the grain box. On the weighing machine was a tally to keep count of the number of bushels of grain threshed. The straw was carried on shakers to a blower. Here it was blown out of the machine, forming a strawstack. The threshing machine was driven by a steam engine with a large flywheel mounted on the right side, over which a belt connected it to the separator.

It was the engineer's duty to keep the engine in repair, move the rig from site to site, and start and stop it at a signal from the separator man. It was the fireman's duty to keep steam by pushing straw into the firebox with a three-tined fork, watch the water gauge, and regulate the injector so as to keep an even amount of water in the boiler. Straw was blown into a hayrack and hauled to the engine to be used as fuel. The waterman hauled water for the engine in a tank

mounted on a wagon drawn by a team of horses. He was required to haul from five to six tanks of water a day, usually from sloughs close by. The separatorman had to keep the separator in repair, lubricate it, see that the belts were tight, and adjust the machine for separating and cleaning the grain.

Men with teams and hay racks loaded the bundles from the shocks into the hayracks. They hauled them to the machines and unloaded the bundles into the feeder. From eight to fourteen teams were required to keep a machine busy, depending on the size of the feeder. The feeders ranged from thirty-two to forty-four inches in size. On the larger rigs, one or two extra men would help the teamsters unload. They were known as spike pitchers. The farmer would haul the grain in sixty bushel grain boxes on wagons. He backed the wagon up to the grain spout by the machine. When the box was full, the spout was transferred to another box. The grain was then hauled to the granary and the grain unloaded by hand with scoop shovels. Every steam engine had a whistle. This the engineer used when called for grain wagons, bundle teams, or signaling to start or stop.

COUNTRY DOCTOR

In those early days there was no such thing as consulting a doctor about minor ailments such as colds, upset stomach, lame back, rheumatism, cuts, and bruises. Mother had her own remedies for treating these. On a shelf in the pantry there was a supply of castor oil, campher, peroxide, spirits of turpentine, carbolic salve, Watkins, linament, Dr. Peters Kuriko, cough syrup, rubbing alcohol, and many others. If inflammation, a boil or sore spot appeared, a poultice of cream and flour was heated, spread on a cloth and applied. For a chest cold, warm lard was rubbed on the chest and back then covered with a heavy wool cloth, then a woolen stocking was tied around the neck and we were sent to bed to keep warm. As a rule in a day or two we were up and about and feeling fine.

Sometimes calling a doctor was necessary. This was quite a problem as we did not have a telephone and the nearest one was over four miles away.

One fall when Laura was ten years old she became violently ill. Dad went to call Dr. Stone who was the nearest doctor. When the doctor arrived that afternoon he informed us that her appendix was ruptured and that it would be impossible to move her to the hospital. He would arrange to operate on her at home the following day. He instructed us to keep her in bed with ice packs on her side. He also told us how to prepare everything in the house in readiness for the operation. Pans and clothing had to be sterilized and any fly that happened to be in the house had to be eliminated.

The next morning he arrived bringing his operating table and surgical equipment. He also brought along his nurse, Anna McGuire, to help with the operation and to stay and take care of Laura after the surgery. She stayed with us for six or seven weeks, being a second operation was necessary. Later Laura was taken to the hospital at Balfour where a third operation was performed before she completely recovered. She missed nearly two years of school on account of this illness.

That year was an expensive one for the folks as Ann also had to go to the hospital at Balfour for an appendectomy.

After all this sickness and doctoring, we became good friends of Doctor Stone and he served as our family doctor until he and his family moved to Minot where he continued his

practice. Dr. Stone was a tall well-built man who weighed over two hundred pounds. He was quick witted and never at a loss for words in expressing his opinions, politically and otherwise. This was true, especially when he became angry which was often the case when things did not suit him.

He probably had good reasons to be angry and short tempered many times when we stop to consider the difficult times he had traveling by horse and buggy or sleigh for many miles over bad roads in all kinds of weather. Sometimes he would find it necessary to stay overnight at the homes of a patient, going home the following morning, many times having had no place to sleep and very little to eat.

I recall the flu epidemic of 1918. That winter, about 11:00 A.M., Dad and I had hauled a load of hay from the stack and were unloading it into the hay mow when we noticed Dr. Stone driving his team and sleigh down the hills from the south, circling around the snow banks to get through. The temperature was well below zero. He drove up along side our load of hay, stopped, tossed the reins to the side of the horses that were white with sweat and frost, jumped out and said, "Unhitch my team, take them into the barn and give them some feed. I'm going in the house for a cup of hot coffee and something to eat." Without saying another word he walked up to the house and went in. After we had taken care of his horses and unloaded the hay we went into the house to hear what the doctor had to say. He had left Balfour two days before on calls to the territory eight to ten miles south of Dogden to administer to people sick with flu. After he got there a blizzard had come up making travel difficult. He now was on his way home, having to break a road, finding his way around the snow banks as best he could. He had started at daybreak. He let out a verbal blast at the telephone, saying that if it wasn't for the telephone they would have to come into town to get him. Now all they had to do was sit in a rocking chair and call him, not considering the weather or road conditions. After a couple hours of rest for the horses he proceeded on his way to Balfour in much better humor. He told Dad the only thing that had kept him going was a bottle of whiskey he carried with him to take a sip of once in a while.

Another incident I recall was the year Nels Person's son, Lloyd, became ill with pneumonia. It was in the winter and the weather was cold. It must have been several degrees below zero and, as usual, there were only the sleigh roads. The least little wind drifted the snow and covered the road, making travel with horses and sleigh slow and almost impossible.

Nels came to our farm that forenoon all bundled up in blankets in his small sleigh. He told us that Lloyd was very sick and that he was on his way to John Ebels, four miles away, where the nearest telephone was located. Mother and Dad

asked him in for coffee and at the table it was decided that Dad would drive over to do the telephoning while Nels stayed to warm up and give his horses some rest. By the time Dad returned it was late in the afternoon. He brought the message that Dr. Stone would arrive at our farm before noon of the following day. Mr. Person was to meet him and take him to his farm. The following morning was just as cold, with a northwest wind drifting the snow lightly over the stubble fields. Nels arrived about 10:00 A. M., anxious to get the doctor. His son was very ill and seemed to be getting worse. About an hour later we noticed a Model T Ford coming from the north, winding its way across the stubble fields. As it came closer we noticed that it would plow into the snow drifts, back up and take another run for it. About three-fourths of a mile from our farm it got into a drift too deep to get either way. Its radiator was steaming so we could only see the car as through a thick fog. We knew, of course, that this must be Dr. Stone. Finally three men got out and walked up to our house. Dr. Stone, carrying his grip, was one of them. He had taken the other two along to help with the difficult driving. The doctor demanded coffee and then proceeded to cuss the people who used the telephone to call the doctor rather than come into town to get him. After lunch Nels started on the seven mile trip home, the doctor bundled up in the sled. After they left, Dad and the two men shoveled the car out of the snow drift and drove it up to the yard and made it ready for the return trip. On returning, Dr. Stone was a lot meeker. He found that Lloyd was a very sick boy and so probably thought to himself that the telephone had saved another life. Nels told us later that he received a bill of \$60.00 from Dr. Stone the following day. This, of course, was a lot of money in those years. Nels waited until a nice warm spring day before he called on the doctor to pay him. He presented him with a nice pork roast and then inquired about the bill. Dr. Stone snapped, "Give me twenty dollars. How is the boy?" Nels felt that he was luck to give Dr. Stone plenty of time to cool off before settling with him.

Dr. Stone loved hunting. His favorite game was upland prairie chicken or grouse. His favorite hunting ground was the hill country south of our farm. He would come out on Saturdays with team and buggy, usually with one or two friends. They would stay with one of the farm families Saturday night and return to Balfour Sunday evening. One of the farmers he liked to call on was Pete Preisinger. He was usually invited in for coffee and some of Mrs. Preisinger's delicious home made German coffee cake.

One Sunday morning he stopped in for the usual coffee and cake. Pete came out with a piece of cloth wrapped around his neck. Doc inquired; "What's the matter with you, Pete?" Pete, having laryngitis, proceeded to explain to him in a squeaky voice about how badly his throat hurt and how hard it

was for him to talk. Doc said, "Open your mouth wide and let me take a look at it." At the same time he had taken out a small pen knife from his pocket and opened it. When Pete had his mouth opened as wide as possible, Doc jabbed the blade of the knife into the sore swollen tonsils. In telling about it, Pete said it hurt tremendously and that if the doctor hadn't been such a big man he would have socked him. "But you know," he said, "in two days I was completely well."

Yes, Dr. Stone was hard and rough but many a time he risked his own life in snow and blizzards to care for his patients. His bills were according to the way he felt. There were times when he never sent a bill. If he was angry the bill would be high. On the other hand, if the family was poor they may not even receive a bill from him. After Doctor Stone moved to Minot, many people from the Balfour territory drove the fifty miles to Minot to patronize him.

UNCLE AXEL

Uncle Axel was Mother's youngest brother. He was a dapper little man, a bachelor, about 5 feet 6 inches, with a very alert mind and a good sense of humor. He was in charge of the glass department of McDonald Brothers in Minneapolis and later, was transferred to Cleveland. Mother corresponded with him regularly and we always looked forward to his letters. His life in a big city seemed very glamorous and exciting to us children.

I well remember the first time Uncle Axel came to visit us. Dad went to town to meet his train when he arrived. I can still picture him sitting on the buggy seat beside Dad when they drove up to the house. The thing that impressed me the most was the derby hat he wore. It was really comical but to us children it looked like the height of fashion and elegance.

Mother and Uncle Axel spent the time reminiscing about their home in Norway. He was well-educated and wrote many articles that were published in the Scandinavian-American newspapers. His pen name was Christoffer Bang.

His second and last visit to the farm was in the mid-twenties. At this time my family and I lived in Kief so the first stop was at our home for dinner before continuing on to the farm. He was as talkative and interesting as before. We all thoroughly enjoyed his visit.

Axel made numerous trips to Norway. He always paid his passage by working as a waiter on the ship. His last trip was in 1942. This time he went with the intention of making his permanent home there. He purchased his parent's Gaard and proceeded to improve and remodel it.

Shortly after this, World War II began. Norway was invaded and conditions were such that he wished himself back in the United States. He made preparations for his return but before they could be completed he had a stroke and passed away April 28, 1948.

RETURNING TO NORWAY
(by Ida Kvam Frantsvog)

Mother had not seen her parents in thirty years and had anxiously awaited the time when she would be able to return to Norway to visit them. She did not want to travel alone and urged me to accompany her.

I taught my first term of school in 1924-25 for which I received a salary of \$80.00 a month. I was able to save enough money to pay all the expenses I would incur on such a trip, so decided to spend my vacation with her.

We made extensive plans and left home the first part of June, arriving in Minneapolis for our first stop. Here we became a part of a large tourist group of Norwegian-Americans who were going to Norway in the summer of 1925 in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Sons of Norway.

At Niagara Falls we were met by Uncle Axel (Axel Neppelberg) who was then employed at Cleveland, Ohio. He came to spend a day with us.

It was a thrill to board the S. S. Stavangerfjord at New York City, the ship on which we traveled. As the large steamer rolled out upon the Atlantic, the beloved Statue of Liberty soon passed from our view and we were lost in water for several exciting days.

The weather was calm which made the voyage exceedingly grand. The food was delicious and the entertainment provided on board made our trip relaxing and enjoyable. Needless to say, when the coast of Norway was sighted everyone was thrilled. As we approached land we were received with warm enthusiasm. People were waving and banners were flying. This was the homecoming of 1000 Norwegian-born Americans.

About 30,000 people were on the pier when the ship docked at Oslo. Among them was our own cousin, Magnhild Christofferson, daughter of Uncle Christoffer. We arrived at that port on June 22 and were received by representatives of the Sons of Norway. We were taken to a large outdoor amphitheater. A group of soldiers and 100 Norwegian girls, dressed in white, were our escorts.

King Haakon and the Queen then arrived and, as they were seated, a great bell (similar to our Liberty Bell) was rung. I was told that this bell had not been rung since 1905, twenty years

before. The bell was dedicated in Norway by American women. A colorful band played "Ja vi Elsker Dette Landet", followed by "The Star Spangled Banner". After this, the King made a welcoming speech.

After a round of sight-seeing in Oslo, we left for our visit in Halegland, Mother's birth place. I was greatly impressed by the beauty of the fjords, the mountains, and the long summer evening in this Land of the Midnight Sun.

Magnhild accompanied us northward as she had been given a fourteen day vacation. Her parents lived at Bardal, a part of Halgeland. We arrived at Nesna where we were met by Grandpa Christofferson. How happy he was to see Mother!

Now we were on the last stage of our journey, before reaching Neppleberg, the family farm. Neppleberg is named for a mountain peak located near it. Again the entire neighborhood welcomed us, a recurrence of our initial Norwegian experience, with banners waving at every home. How exciting to be so well received! People of Norway are exceedingly patriotic and polite.

A little old lady met us at the door at Neppleberg. Grandma Christofferson! She might be likened to a shining candle. Her cheerful valor stood out for she was unselfish, meek, and so kind. Grandpa was a respectable old gentleman and steadfast in his convictions. Both were devout Christians.

From then on we were kept busy visiting relatives and Mother's old friends, drinking coffee and eating all the good food prepared for us. The young people made me feel very much at home with them.

It was a sad parting, leaving all our dear ones who we were sure we would never meet again on this earth. We boarded Bergensfjord at Oslo, August 11 to return again to the United States and our home in North Dakota. That, too, was a thrill. Most rewarding of all was knowing Mother's joy at having been reunited with her loved ones.

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PETER AND JONETTE JOHANSEN

Peter and Jonette Johansen were frequent visitors at our house. They would come over on Sunday forenoon, driving the big roan horse hitched to a single buggy. After a scrumptious dinner prepared by Mother, Pete and Dad would engage in conversation and discussions. Pete had come to this country from Sweden not too long before so their conversation was carried on in the Swedish and Norwegian language. I was a very attentive listener and can still picture the setting of those early day conversations. Only occasionally did they take time out from their conversation to relight their pipes.

They were visiting us one scorching hot day. By noon the sun was shining blood red through a brownish veil of dust picked up by a strong southwest wind. The wheat was at the stage where it was beginning to head. By early afternoon brown spots appeared in the field which was caused by the burning hot wind. Wondering how hot it was, Pete walked to the north of the house where the thermometer was hanging. He came back with a bewildered look on his face saying, "Nu mener jeg Fahn, nu er han hundre-ti". (Now I think the devil, it's hundred and ten).

Later the conversation drifted to farm machinery. Pete said he was going to a farm auction to buy a secondhand plow. Dad inquired if he was going to buy a sulky plow and Pete answered, "Jeg vil da Fahn into he wholke, jeg vil ha whang". (The devil, I don't want a sulky, I want a gang).

He wasn't getting on well with his Russian neighbors. One of them had a big bull that would jump the fence and feed in Pete's oat field. Once when Jonette had tried to chase this bull, he had scared her back into the house. The bull then continued to feed on the oats so Pete loaded the shot gun, determined to get him out of the field. When he got the distance from the bull where he thought it would sting enough to give him a good scare, he took aim and let him have it. In telling about it he said, "Den forbanna Russe bullen lofta rompen i lufta og sprang som um han var paa vein til helvede". (The damn Russian bull raised his tail in the air and ran as if he was on his way to hell).

Pete was proud of his well-fed horses and enjoyed talking about some of his experiences with them. One summer after finishing spring work he did not use them until he was ready for harvest. Then one day he hitched them to the binder and drove out to the field. When he set the binder in gear and the horses heard the noise and

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saw the reel going around, they raised up on their hind legs and took off. Pete was balancing on the seat and tugging violently at the reins to stop them. Realizing that he would be unable to do so he maneuvered them in the direction of a deep slough below the house which was full of water and tall grass. He said they raced over the hill and down into the slough, stopping in water up to their knees. The binder was plugged with the tall grass. I am unable to recall the Swedish language and cuss words he used but remember it was colorful and to the point.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the car was the smell of fresh air. It was a relief after being stuck in traffic for hours. The sun was shining brightly, and the birds were chirping. I took a deep breath and felt a sense of peace. The world was beautiful, and I was grateful to be here. I walked towards the park, and the children's laughter was heard in the distance. The flowers were in full bloom, and the trees were lush green. It was a perfect day, and I was lucky to have it. I smiled and enjoyed every moment of it.

NEIGHBORHOOD INCIDENTS

A couple of miles to the northwest of us lived two Russian families, both men professing to be socialists. They talked and argued politics with small groups of farmers at the street corners on Saturday afternoons at Kief, while the women were shopping at the local stores.

Alex, a small dried-up, dark-complexioned fellow was well educated. Being his partner, George, was unable to read, he would drive over to Alex's farm on Sundays to get posted on the latest political developments. They would then practice the art of using dynamite by blowing up large stones in the plowed fields. When the time came to move in and take over the government, they would be experts at dynamiting bridges, factories or any other objective their party headquarters designated for destruction. Alex's wife and son disagreed with this form of politics. The result was that Alex finally left them and moved to Kief, renting a small shack where he could operate without interference from them.

George also moved to Kief, opening a blacksmith shop and making moonshine on the side. The two now decided to expand their political influence. Renting the city hall, they advertised a big socialist rally to be held the following Saturday afternoon. Neither one was able to speak English so the speech was in the Russian language, with Alex as the speaker. George acted as the usher and, of course, had the honor of introducing the speaker. Information leaked out that Alex's wife was coming to the meeting with fire in her eye. This brought out the crowd, all anxious to see and hear what was going to happen. At 2:00 P. M., the time scheduled for the meeting, the hall was packed. Not only the Russian speaking people but the businessmen, including the banker, had locked up their places of business in order to attend the rally and take in the expected excitement.

At the designated time, George strode up to the table, at the far end of the hall. He was followed by Alex who seated himself in the chair next to the table. After a few introductory remarks by George, and as Alex rose to speak, his wife came in carrying a milk bucket under her arm. All eyes stared at her as she marched up the aisle and stopped directly in front of the speaker's table. She dipped her hand into the fresh cow manure she had in the pail and spattered it all over Alex's face and clothes, at the same time shouting, "I give you speech!" Both Alex and George made a hasty exit by way of the back door.

This terminated the meeting and as far as was known, all political activities by the two self-styled politicians.

Neighborhood disagreements were as much a part of pioneer life as of our present day living. I remember an incident in which two families were in discord over putting in a crop. It seems the family who I shall call Rodmann lived on property belonging to a fellow called Pete. Every morning, when Pete went to work, he would see Mrs. Rodmann coming toward him. In her hand she concealed something which he was sure was a revolver. She hid it under the red sweater she was wearing.

Pete was worried. He wasn't above being a little shady in his own business affairs but did not want to get shot. He went to McClusky to see the States Attorney and requested him to make a secret investigation of the matter.

One morning as my sisters, Ann and Ida, were herding cattle, they saw Pete coming down the road to go farming. On his wagon was a large wood piano box. He drove toward the Rodmanns but wasn't gone very long. Later Pete told Dad about having had the States Attorney hid in the large box. As they approached the Rodmann farm, Mrs. Rodmann again came strolling down the road to meet him with her hand underneath her sweater. On seeing this through a crack in the box, the States Attorney became so frightened that he urged Pete to hurry away from there before either of them got shot.

In spite of her threats, Pete continued to put in the crop. On one of these trips he drove over Mrs. Rodmann's garden with a four-horse drill. This angered the lady to the extent that she did shoot the revolver only to hit Pete's innocent wife instead of the man she disliked so much. Pete and his wife came hurrying over to our farm and Mother dressed the wounds. She had been shot through both arms. They then went on to Drake to consult a doctor. The woman was not seriously hurt. The Rodmanns soon had to leave the community.

REMINISCENCE OF THE PAST

There were times during our first winters on the farm that snow storms would continue for two or three days, piling the drifts over the hay stacks and the water tank at the Wehr farm. At times the wind blew the whirling snow so hard, we had to fight our way to get to the barn to feed the livestock or milk the cows. After the storm abated, the sky cleared rapidly, revealing the drifted landscape.

The worst part of this was watering the livestock. After shoveling a path into the barn, we had to walk over a quarter of a mile to the Wehr farm to uncover the water tank. Sometimes the drifts were so high it was impossible to determine where to start digging. If the drifts were too high we had to take a team of horses and a hand scraper to locate the tank. By the time we had the tank uncovered and got back to the barn, the stock would be bellowing for water. We would turn the milk cows out first, the older ones walked in single file, breaking the way through the drifts to the water tank. After they had their fill, they returned to the barn and each cow entered her individual stall. As they did so we stood ready to slip a knotted rope around their necks.

It wasn't only the winter storms that the homesteaders had to worry about. Some summers it was almost impossible to gather up enough hay to feed the livestock over the winter months. It was so dry that there was no hay to be cut on the prairie or in the sloughs. If there was too much rain then the sloughs would be full of water.

I recall one year the prairie and coulees were burned brown from the hot winds. We had rented the Parmenter quarter. It had two big sloughs with a nice growth of grass on them. After we had it all cut down and ready to rake, there was a heavy rain storm that filled the sloughs with water. All we could salvage was less than ten loads or about one-sixth of the hay we needed. As luck would have it, Pete Johnson had the school section west of his farm rented, and on it there was more hay than he could use. It was over ten miles from us and a long way to haul hay, but we managed to make one trip a day so by fall we had two stacks of about twenty-five loads in each.

There were also the cyclones. I remember a blistering hot day in 1917 when we were out by the hay stack unloading a load of hay. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when we noticed a dark boiling cloud, hanging low in the sky, gradually growing bigger and bigger. It shaped itself in the sky to the northwest. We didn't

pay too much attention to it at the time as we were busy trying to top off and tie down the hay stack. Soon the wind began to rise and change rapidly from one direction to another. It caused the wind mill to spin this way and that way as if in a whirlwind. This was followed by a stiff breeze and a gust of cool air that almost tipped the hay racks. To the west the dark cloud lowered a black lip and we then knew that a cyclone was being born. The lip of the black cloud could be seen lifting, then dipping again. The funnel of the cyclone was homing in eagerly toward the big round roofed barn of Helmer Dalos which had been completed only a few days before. We watched it as the funnel closed in, leveling the barn like a bomb.

Within the space of fifteen minutes or so the dark overcast had already begun to break up in the west, admitting narrow rays of sunlight, while a reasurring rainbow struck up an arc of blazing colors against the eastern curtain of the swiftly departing clouds. The neighbors gathered at the Dalos farm the following two Saturdays to help salvage what was left of the lumber in the barn. They gathered up most of it, including almost all of the shingles. Later there was a dance and the money taken in was donated toward rebuilding the barn.

In those early days it was not uncommon for the homesteaders to get together on Saturdays and Sundays to help a neighbor in need. I remember the winter of 1916-17 when Carl Olson was running the farmer's elevator at Dogden. He made a trip to the stock yards in St. Paul and bought 200 head of two and three year old feeders. He shipped them to his dad's homestead for him to winter feed. This happened to be one of the hardest winters we had. Snow drifted up over all the farm buildings. When spring finally arrived the sleigh roads were built up several feet high. A. P. Olson did stack a lot of hay that fall, all in small stacks in the sloughs among the hills. The stacks were one-half mile or more from the feeding lots. Toward spring his well gave out, compelling him to haul water in tanks mounted on sleighs from neighboring wells and deep slough nearby. Old A. P. and the two hired men shoveled snow, and hauled hay and water from before daylight until after dark all winter.

In March, about the time the weather was expected to break, there was another three-day blizzard. The neighbors, knowing the predicament Mr. Olsen was in, gathered at his farm the Saturday following the blizzard with hay racks, sleighs, pitch forks, shovels, and horses. They shoveled out stacks, cleared roads and hauled water and hay enough to last for several days. One of the hired men said his fingers had been around the shovel and pitch fork handle so much that when spring came he was unable to straighten them. He claimed that he had not seen daylight inside the house all winter. In spite of all this a large number of the stock either starved or froze to death by the time the snow had melted.

Families moving out to their homesteads often stopped at our farm on their way and were always made welcome. I recall the

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Headman family. They came to our farm one evening; eight of them in a sleigh: Mr. and Mrs. Headman, three boys, two girls, and a hired man. They were on their way from Balfour out to their homestead which was seven miles south of us. It was dark when they arrived, the horses were tired and the only roads going south were sleigh trails leading to the haystacks scattered between the hills. They inquired about stopping over until the following morning but Mother could not see how we were going to make room for that many in the shack. It was finally decided that the men would sleep in the barn and Mrs. Headman and the girls would sleep on the shanty floor.

During the night a wind came up and by morning there was a howling blizzard with the wind from the northwest, making it almost impossible to get between the house and the barn, let alone trying to find the way over the hills. It turned out to be one of those late spring blizzards with the wind piling up the snow in huge drifts.

The men had a hard time getting to the barn to milk the cows and to the coal shed for coal. Mother had to get busy baking bread while Mrs. Headman cooked oatmeal for breakfast. After the morning meal their hired man said, "Ja oat mel er de beste en kan faa om morran". (Oat meal is the best one can get in the morning) Although crowded, we managed. By rationing out the bedding and the blankets they had in the sleigh, we were fairly comfortable at night. Except for a little shivering in the mornings no one suffered. I well remember how glad we were when the storm subsided and they left on the morning of the third day.

There was a bachelor homesteader that used to stop at our farm regularly on his trips to and from Balfour. He always had time for a cup of coffee and a short visit. We were surprised when he stopped late one evening with a big husky lady sitting on the buggy seat beside him. Introducing her as his new wife, he asked if they could stay until the following morning. Mother said they were welcome to stay if they were willing to sleep on the floor. Being from the city and unaccustomed to such primitive conditions, the new bride was rather reluctant but finally agreed.

After supper Mother prepared a bed for them by spreading a few old quilts on the floor to sleep on with a couple of blankets for covers. He was small and skinny while she was big and fat, so after they went to bed they had trouble with the blankets. When she would tuck them around her, he would be lying along side of her in his underwear with the blankets covering but half of him. Being chilly, he would tug at the blanket trying to cover up, she in turn jerked them right back. Erma Sanford was staying with us that night and slept in the bed with us children. She noticed what was going on so every time he would pull the blanket she would snicker. This kept on for some time, he pulling carefully and trying to get enough to cover up and she in turn jerking the blanket right back and scolding him for pulling the blankets off her. Erma finally was

unable to control her laughter. She sat up in bed and laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks. The bride became very angry and scolded her for laughing at them. She ended with the warner, "You just wait until you get married and you'll find out how it is to lay and freeze". In the morning, after a warm breakfast, they headed for home. I do not recall seeing either of them again. Maybe he froze to death without blankets and she returned to a warmer bed in the city.

Then there was the time Ole Hammes and Erick Erickson stayed over night. They were on their way to their homesteads to build their sod houses. They only had two or three miles to go but there was no place for them to sleep after they got there so Mother and Dad invited them to stay until the following morning. Before going to bed the cook stove was filled with lignite coal and the damper closed to cut the draft in order to keep the fire until morning. During the night the wind went down, causing the stove to fill the room with poisonous gas fumes. Ole, waking from the odor, hurriedly opened the door for fresh air and then aroused the others. Some of us had to be carried outside. We were all quite ill. Mother was sick for many days. Ole and Erick, sleeping on the floor, were the least affected by the fumes.

Early that spring, Ole, Erick, and an old bachelor by the name of Paul Pederson, who lived close to Balfour, came by one evening. Their horses were tired from pulling heavy loads of lumber. It was decided they should stay over night and continue on their way in the morning. After entering the house it was quite obvious that they had been drinking. Paul was hauling lumber for Erick and they soon began arguing about the amount of money he was to receive. As the argument became loud and heated, the two of us children crowded into the furthest corner of the room. Mother was cool and composed and went about her work preparing the evening meal. As the argument continued, Erick reached into his pocket and pulled out a hunting knife. Opening the blade he grabbed Paul by the whiskers and threatened to cut his beard off. By that time Dad jumped up from his chair and grabbed each man by the shoulder. He set them back on their chairs and told them to behave. Supper was soon ready and everyone settled down to a hearty meal. The argument was soon forgotten and the men visited long after the evening meal.

About two weeks after that Paul Pederson disappeared, later to be found buried in the barn on his homestead. Death was caused by knife wounds in the chest.

There were other homesteaders that stayed over from time to time. I believe the Christ Furness family stayed the longest. Mrs. Furness and Engvald, the baby, stayed over a week while Mr. Furness got the house far enough along to be suitable to live in. They also brought along several head of cattle that we kept until they moved to the farm. It was the usual sleeping quarters in the one room, with quilts and blankets on the floor for the extra bed.

S. B. Sgutt, a Jew from Dogden, filed on a claim two miles southeast of us. After he had built a small shack on it, Mrs. Sgutt would come from Dogden on Saturday, stay overnight and return to Dogden on Sunday afternoon. She drove across country, through our yard, in a single buggy pulled by an old gray horse. The granddaughter, Fanny, sat in the seat beside her and two grandsons, Julius and Paul, sat in back with their feet hanging over the end gate. At this time Mr. Sgutt had a small grocery store at Dogden. It was rumored that his brother in Harvey gave him a dozen oranges to get started in the grocery business. With them driving back and forth through our yard, we soon became acquainted and so would stop at their store to do some of our trading when in Dogden. Mr. Sgutt wore a goatee and had a habit of spitting while talking, part of the saliva always seemed to land on his vest. This he would wipe with his hand until the vest had a smeary shine to it. If, in his estimation, the customer did not buy enough, he would say, "Mister, make business! Make business, you lose a little, I lost a little. Make business!" I recall one time when waiting for the eggs to be counted, we were standing by the overall counter. Mrs. Sgutt, hoping to make a sale, came over and innocently said, "Mister, you like my pants?" A prairie fire burned the shack on the Sgutt farm. The Sgutt boys, Julius and Paul, later became very successful business men, owning large department stores in Minot and Fargo.

It was common for the small grocery stores to buy cream from the farmers, keeping the cream barrels in a back shed. When they had the cream tested and weighed, they would empty the cans into these fifty gallon wooden barrels. Flies crawled all over the outside of these barrels. When cars became a mode of transportation there was another barrel added to this back shed. This was an oil barrel with a pump on it. Whenever a customer drove up in front of the store to fill gas from the one gasoline pump, no matter what grade or brand of oil he requested, the one barrel in the shed contained the suggested product.

George Melock, another Jew from Dogden, eked out an existence by buying hides, old rubbers, copper bottom boilers and kettles. He also gathered buffalo bones on the hills and prairie. These he shipped in carload lots to fertilizer manufacturers in the east. If he came across a dead horse or cow that some farmer had hauled out to a coulee or slough, it would be sure to get skinned no matter how bad the stench was. He was in competition with the peddlers that used to travel from farm to farm, buying scraps and selling notions.

One of the regular callers was a Syrian known as Old Shaker. He would come, driving his team and double buggy loaded with trunks, strapped bundles of clothing, and suit cases. Mother generally made it a point to buy a few articles from him; spices, a piece of lace, buttons, or a piece of cloth for a dress. Shaker had a homestead among the Norwegians in the Skogmo district and had learned the Norwegian names of the articles he sold.

Although unable to read or write, he would extend credit to his customers from one trip to the next. It was a puzzle to many as to how he could remember the amount due him from one trip to the next with so many accounts. His system was simple. He would remember the amount until he arrived at the next farm. There, he would have them write the figure down, including the name of the buyer. On the return trip he would inquire of a neighbor as to the amount and name, thereby having it correct to the penny when he came to collect.

Yes, farming in the Dakotas in those early years was indeed a hazardous occupation. There were the blizzards during the winter months and in the summer there were the crop failures due to rust, hail, dust storms, and drought. The farmers would have nothing to show for a summer of hard work except debts and some worn out farm machinery. Many were hard hit because of borrowing too much money, having to give the banker a chattle mortgage and a crop mortgage besides having a mortgage on the homestead. In 1915 there was a bumper crop. The following year with plenty of moisture the prospect was for another big crop. Late in June rust set in, ruining the grain to the extent that many of the farmers plowed under or burned their fields. Then followed the drought years of 1917, 1918, and 1919. Many of the homesteaders were unable to make ends meet. In order to get enough money to move to a new location, they sold their livestock and household goods at auction sales, trying to net a few dollars and pay off their mortgages at the bank. By 1920 nearly all of the homesteaders in the Norwegian settlement south of us had either lost or turned their farms over to the bankers and moved to distant locations. Only a few of the original settlers remained.

The reason we managed to keep our farm was because our means of support was mainly from the milk cows and livestock. We did not depend entirely on crops. Those that remained were able to do so because they did not borrow money from the banks. Instead they skimped and got along with the bare necessities. By denying themselves some of the conveniences the others enjoyed they had the satisfaction of not having to pay high interest rates to the banks with no notes or mortgages coming due.

There were forty acres adjoining our homestead to the south. This was still vacant at the time I reached the age of twenty-one. As soon as I became of age I made claim to it, making final proof February 21, 1925.

In the fall of 1923 I left the farm to move to Kief to accept the position as postmaster. After moving to Kief, Mother and Dad continued to live on the farm until 1930. They rented the crop land to Emil Knodel. That year they purchased a house in Kief and moved there in August. All of the girls except Laura were married by this time. She made her home with the folks during the summer months, teaching rural schools during the school term.

When I now think of the homestead I think of a spring morning, the meadow larks, newly arrived, singing their hearts out.

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I think of a summer evening, the coolness of the breeze, the sweet smelling newly-cut hay, night hawks coursing in the dusk and the stars beginning to twinkle in the sky. I think of the winter mornings, the hills an immensity of snow, the cold winter afternoons, with the sun dogs encircling the sinking sun. I remember finding Indian arrowhead, a reminder that before we arrived the Indians had roamed this land. I will never forget the drumming sound of the prairie chickens and grouse in the early mornings and late spring evenings. Then there were the northern ducks and wild geese in flight from their nesting grounds in the Canadian plains. The country is still alive with visions of the past and the distant echoing sound of the screeching owl, howling coyote, whistle of the steam engine, and the clang of the lumber wagons.

As homesteaders we trusted in God and the future. We did not receive much in compensation for our toil. I have always been thankful, however, for the memories of my childhood days spent with kindly parents and sisters.

Mother became ill in the winter of 1939, suffering from anemia and complications. She passed away at Minot Trinity Hospital on June 1, 1939 at the age of sixty-nine. Dad passed away at sister Ida's home in Butte, North Dakota, on November 17, 1943, at the age of eighty-six. They were members of the St. Pauls Lutheran Church and are buried at the Butte Cemetery.

THE END

